

Who speaks for Glasgow?

We want better than Labour or the SNP, say workers >>Pages 10&11

Stathis Kouvelakis from Syriza opens a two-part debate >>Pages 14&15

SYRIZA & SOCIALIST STRATEGY



Socialist Worker

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REFUGEES GO ON HUNGER STRIKE

CLOSE THE CAMPS

PROTEST IN Harmondsworth detention centre on Monday

OVER 100 refugees at Harmondsworth immigration detention centre near Heathrow airport were on hunger strike as Socialist Worker went to press.

Detainees began protesting last Sunday and released a letter complaining about the conditions. "Everyone here is burning in the fire of uncertainty, that is the worst form of mental and physical torture, without any offence or crime and without any punishment decided by the court," it said.

They occupied the exercise yard on Monday of this week, chanting "Freedom, freedom, freedom!"

John McDonnell MP, whose constituency includes Harmondsworth, told Socialist Worker, "Detainees are justifiably protesting at the injustice of the fast track system.

"This rapidly removes people from our country without time or facilities to put their case for asylum status effectively and fairly.

"The real issue though is the immorality of detaining people who have committed no crime—unless it is

>>Page 3

EDUCATION

Tory threat to build 500 new free schools

DAVID CAMERON promised that if the Tories win May's election they will create 500 new free schools.

These are state funded and privately run. Free schools are an attack on education as a public service.

The Tories also revealed plans to slash 30,000 more jobs in the civil service.

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GREEN PARTY



Conference calls for alternative to Tory austerity

THE GREEN Party's biggest ever conference was swelled by new recruits last week. Thousands disillusioned with Labour have joined.

Leader Natalie Bennett slammed austerity, and MP Caroline Lucas called for a "progressive alliance" with other parties.

>>Page 7

CHILD ABUSE

Thatcher ignored boys' accusations against top MP

FORMERLY secret documents have revealed that Margaret Thatcher knew Liberal MP Cyril Smith was accused of abusing boys when she granted him a knighthood.

Meanwhile, a withering report into child abuse in Oxfordshire found police ignored victims there.

>>Pages 3&17

RAGE AGAINST RACISM DEMONSTRATIONS
SATURDAY 21 MARCH
CARDIFF, GLASGOW, LONDON

Details page 4



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'I feel a little bit awkward if I'm honest'

Labour's **Chuka Umunna** on apparently being a sex symbol

'You keep it real'

Umunna backs selfies

'That is a fact of life'

Ukip leader **Nigel Farage** on women earning less than men after having a child

'Women-friendly policies'

The heading on the sheet **Farage** took to the interview—but perhaps didn't read

'The terrifying prospect of the Scots ruling England is now all too real'

The Daily Mail gets panicky

'Why the rich love property'

An enlightening pullout from The Times

'I think people have got a right to see the people putting themselves forward as our next prime minister and to see the choice'

Prime Minister **David Cameron** spelling out his support for TV debates in 2010



Cameron, the IMF and the army celebrate women's day

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S Day was a chance to celebrate—or patronise, depending on your view—women's achievements.

The day was originally conceived by working class women who wanted to fight for radical changes in society.

Unsurprisingly, the bosses and the rich see it somewhat differently.

The head of the International Monetary Fund Christine Lagarde issued a video message to celebrate pushing an "equality through austerity" agenda. Prime minister David Cameron tweeted about women who inspired him.

Nike launched the Air Max 1 Women's City Collection. Various brand ambassadors said stuff to sell stuff.

The Independent newspaper marked the day with a special supplement apparently filled with inspiring women.

It included RAF reservist flying officer Lesley Woods. Her job is to make the army look good in the media.

For Lesley there is a "kindness, courage, compassion and camaraderie that is unique to women in the armed forces".



Meanwhile reservist lieutenant colonel Patricia Cook explained that it was "exciting" going to Iraq in 2004.

Many other firms used International Women's Day on Sunday to promote themselves. But some couldn't be bothered to get the details right.

As the National Grid put it, "This Saturday is International Women's Day."

It got Simon Langley to explain why gender imbalance within business was

such an important issue.

Simon asks, "Why would any business knowingly exclude a group which is capable of producing the next innovative idea that could potentially be worth millions of pounds?" Quite.

If this wasn't enough, the Metropolitan Police were holding a See How Far We Have Come event to "Showcase Female Excellence in the Metropolitan Police Service".

MULTI-MILLIONAIRE TONY Blair has found a use for a bit of his cash. He's given £106,000 to Labour's general election campaign. The news was reported as a sign that Blair has "confidence" in Labour leader Ed Miliband. Three candidates have turned down the cash. So far.

Blood donor

THE TORIES were spinning a possible 77p gain per week as a budget benevolence. Tory chancellor George Osborne may increase the income tax starting point by £200. This adds insult to injury when the TUC calculates the value of the average wage fell £2,500 since he got the job.

£21,000 for Tory to get valuable insight

TORY WHIP Mark Lancaster has come up with a great excuse for his second job.

The minister took a £21,000 a year second job with Palmer Capital Partners, a London investment firm, for 18 months.

Apparently this was nothing to do with being unable to get by on his MPs' salary—plus expenses.

No, it was to get "a valuable insight into the world of investment".

IT seems we may

have no MPs left after May's general election.

The parliamentary watchdog Ipsa has said MPs will no longer be able to claim expenses for things such as dinners or TV licenses after 8 May.

Disgraced Tory MP Malcolm Rifkind recently said MPs wouldn't do the job if they couldn't claim expenses.

But on the other hand, MPs will see their salaries rise to £74,000.

And the budget for staff and office costs for MPs will rise, so perhaps we'll be stuck with some of them.



Mark Lancaster

Cost is no limit to Royal protection

WOMEN WHO have suffered abuse get startlingly little help in terms of resources and support from the state. If only they were rich royals!

Cops are monitoring 220 stalkers who "could" pose a threat to Kate Middleton.



Kate Middleton

sources for "potential threats". Former head of royal protection for the Metropolitan Police Dai Davies said, "Prevention is one of the key areas."

Shame that doesn't apply when it comes to protecting ordinary women.

BATTERSEA Dogs and Cats Home in London has launched a competition to find a dog to meet the queen. The chief royal scrounger is due to visit later this month. Battersea boss Claire Horton said, "What dog owner wouldn't want their pet to see the queen?" Several.

Was Crufts killing a hate crime?

THE PRESS made much of the murder at Crufts last weekend. While a shortage of leads encouraged puns, the media needs to take responsibility for its words and the actions they encourage.

In the run-up to the canine eugenics competition the Daily Telegraph claimed, "There's a foreign invasion going on at Crufts".

It added that people thought "foreign pooches are winning a disproportionate number of the top prizes."

The Daily Mail joined in and explained, "Foreigners benefit from more experience using hairspray". The Independent asked "Should foreign dogs be allowed to compete?"

Now an Irish Setter who lived in Belgium lies dead.



FAT CAT OF THE WEEK

Tory MP Crispin Blunt

●The flights and a hotel for a trip to learn about Jordan were paid for by foreign exchange firm Kamal Exchange Company (KEC)

●Within weeks of his return to Britain, he had landed a £1,250 a day second job—as an adviser to KEC

●He has two other jobs on top of his £67,000 MP's salary

Terrorism 101 on Palestine

CHILDREN'S work which refers to Palestinians as "terrorists" has been withdrawn by a council.

Eleven year olds at a primary school in Motherwell, Scotland, were issued worksheets that said, "Palestinians feel they have the RIGHT to use terrorism against Israelis."

It then asked the pupils to "describe two examples of Palestinian terrorist activities".

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Write to Socialist Worker PO Box 42184 London SW8 2WD

Light is shed on cover up of establishment abusers

by SIMON BASKETTER

THREE LINKED events threw some light on allegations of child abuse by the rich and powerful and their attempts to cover it up.

First, Margaret Thatcher was personally warned that Liberal MP Cyril Smith had sexually abused eight boys before she granted him a knighthood.

Secret papers include a letter from Lord Shackleton to Thatcher. It warned that police had investigated Smith in 1970 for “indecent assault against teenage boys”.

The state confiscated some journalists’ files. The Sun newspaper had a copy of Smith’s police file but did not publish it.

All the spooks’ vetting files on politicians past and present should be published.

Second, cops raided Tory Lord Leon Brittan’s homes over alleged child abuse and the home of Lord Bramall, once Britain’s top ranking army officer.

They also raided the home of former Tory MP Harvey Proctor.

Proctor and Bramall took to the media to strongly deny any wrongdoing. This is not always an option for people raided by the police.

Brittan, having died in January, did not.

Generals

Proctor said, “I have not been part of any rent boy ring with cabinet ministers, other MPs or generals or the military.”

Proctor was a leading figure in the notorious Monday Club, a far right pressure group inside the Tories.

He demanded the forcible repatriation of 50,000 “coloured” immigrants a year. He was forced to resign after being convicted of gross indecency in 1987.

A witness known as Nick has alleged Brittan had been present at

TONY MCSWEENEY is the first abuser to be convicted over the Elm Guest House scandal

BACK STORY

Multiple police operations are investigating allegations of an establishment network linked to historic child sexual abuse

● MPs, cabinet ministers, police, spies, judges and diplomats are all said to be involved

● They have been accused of abuse, rape, murder and covering their tracks over many decades

● A wide-ranging inquiry into the allegations has yet to properly start under the Tories due to conflicts of interest of those appointed to run it

VIP child abuse parties. Asked how he knew the man present was the former home secretary he replied, “Well, he told me. Not his full name. He told me that it was Leon.”

Nick said Brittan was present when two unidentified men murdered a boy following sexual abuse around 1981 or 1982.

Third and most significant is the conviction of father Tony McSweeney. He is the first abuser to be convicted over the Elm Guest House scandal.

McSweeney was convicted for offences of indecent assault of a minor and making indecent images of children. John Stingemore—former

manager of the Grafton Close care home—was charged with similar offences, but died before the trial.

Boys from Grafton Close were sent to the Elm Guest House and other venues including Dolphin Square in Pimlico to be abused.

Alleged abusers included cabinet ministers and MPs, diplomats, spies, police officers and judges.

Cyril Smith was a visitor to the guest house, as was Leon Brittan. At least one boy abused at Grafton Close, Peter Bornshin, later killed himself.

McSweeney will be sentenced on 27 March. The true extent of the scandal and cover-up may take longer to expose.

IN BRIEF

Strike against big budget cuts

PUBLIC SECTOR workers in Northern Ireland were set to strike on Friday of this week.

Teachers, health workers, civil service and transport workers plan to walk out over government budget cuts and job losses. It could be the biggest strike for many years.

Cells a ‘default option’ for care

CUSTODY IN police stations is becoming the “default option” for mentally ill adults and children with nowhere to go says a police watchdog.

A 90 year old with dementia was among those held in police cells. He was waiting for an NHS bed to be found, after care home staff were unable to deal with him.

New rules limit access to travel

DISABLED PEOPLE will now find it harder to get adapted vehicles unless they work, volunteer, study or have sole responsibility for childcare.

Publicly funded private firm Motability has changed the criteria for Special Vehicle Grants. Sign the petition chn.ge/1BmrUkj

Care watchdog slams Barnet

THE CARE Quality Commission slammed the Tory council-controlled care service Your Choice Barnet last week. Its report “found that people using the service were exposed to significant risk to their safety”.

Barnet Unison said it was “a stark warning” of why care workers’ pay shouldn’t be cut.

Socialist Worker

MAY DAY GREETINGS



To celebrate May Day, Socialist Worker prints solidarity messages from readers, trade union branches, SWSS groups and campaigns. The deadline to get your message into Socialist Worker is **Wednesday 15 April**

mayday@socialistworker.co.uk

Close the camps—free the refugees

>> continued from page 1

now a crime to flee from abuse of human rights or crippling poverty. The solution to the protests is simple. Close down Harmondsworth Detention Centre.”

The centre is run by private firm Mitie. A Channel 4 news investigation showed undercover filming by Corporate Watch, which included Mitie’s senior manager at the facility saying prisoners will be locked in their cells for an extra two hours each night.

Many of the showers and toilets are broken. A staff member says, “80 percent of washing machines and dryers are broken.”

Protests have spread to Tinsley

House near Gatwick, where 32 are on hunger strike.

A deportation flight was set to take eight Afghan refugees at 10.30pm on Tuesday night. One of the Afghans is Hamid Mohammad, who told Channel 4, “There we die cruelly. Here we die softly.”

A parliamentary report into detention released this month calls the system “expensive, ineffective and unjust”.

The arbitrary nature of “failing asylum” was shown last week when Aderonke Apata’s appeal against

deportation was denied.

She claimed asylum because she is a lesbian who faces persecution if returned to Nigeria. Her girlfriend was killed by vigilantes. Yet the Home Office rejected her appeal because she has children

and was previously in a heterosexual relationship.

Campaign group Right to Remain has backed Aderonke and is calling on supporters of migrant rights to join the Stand Up to Racism demonstrations on 21 March. A migrant rights bloc is planned for the London march.



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Harmondsworth

IN THIS WEEK

1987

The killing of Daniel Morgan

Daniel Morgan was murdered on 10 March 1987. He had been about to take allegations of police corruption to the News of the World.

Police have admitted corruption and a cover-up in the inquiries into Daniel’s death.



Activists build 21 March demos as Tories plan racist crackdown

by KENOLENDE

BUILD THE DEMOS

POLITICIANS AND the media are ramping up Islamophobia and racism against migrants in the run-up to May's general election.

A Home Office document leaked last Sunday exposed Tory plans to clamp down on Muslims and benefit claimants who can't speak English.

It reportedly said, "We need to be more assertive in promoting our values...and this will include explaining our foreign policy."

Plans include making it harder to get British citizenship and forcing job centre workers to penalise people who don't support "British values" or have English language skills.

This underlines why the Stand Up to Racism demonstrations on 21 March in Cardiff, Glasgow and London are crucial.

Marching

Maz Saleem will be marching in London on the day. She's been an activist since a racist murdered her Muslim father in 2013.

"I think it's disgusting that David Cameron is still scapegoating migrants, when we know it was the bankers who caused this crisis," said Maz.

"My father was an immigrant. He worked hard for this society all his life and paid his taxes."

The campaign against the Muslim detainee group Cage deepened last week as the Charity Commission insisted that two charities give it no further funding.

The Muslim Council of Britain has sent a letter supporting 21 March to be read in mosques this Friday.

Romanians living in Britain protested outside Channel 4 last week about the stereotyping in its new show, *The Romanians Are Coming*.

Tommy Tomescu of the Alliance Against Discrimination of Central and Eastern Europeans told *Socialist Worker* it didn't show the wide range of Romanians in Britain.

●Join the weekend of action on 13–15 March. Leaflet workplaces, schools, colleges, places of worship and stations

●Order leaflets and posters. Email info@standuptoracism.org.uk or call 020 8971 7426.

●Book your place on local transport

●For more details go to standuptoracism.org.uk or on Facebook at Stand up to racism & fascism

"But one of the main Romanian papers in Britain has agreed to carry a flyer for the march," he said.

Activists are also mobilising in Cardiff and Glasgow. NASUWT teachers' union official for Scotland Jane Peckham told *Socialist Worker*, "It's important everyone goes on this march and also challenges scapegoating ahead of the general election."

Mobilising rallies are taking place around Britain. Maz has also spoken at several of them. "The atmosphere has been brilliant," she said.

Over 80 heard Diane Abbott MP in Hackney, east London. A similar number gathered in Sheffield, where speakers included justice campaigner Janet Alder.

Jewish author David Rosenberg told the meeting in Westbourne Park, in north west London, how he's become uncomfortably aware of a recent rise in Antisemitism.

"How much worse it must be for Muslims," he commented.

The meeting agreed to leaflet Chelsea football stadium after the shocking footage of racist fans seen in recent weeks.

Unite Against Fascism joint secretary Weyman Bennett said, "Everyone must go all out in the final week before the demo. We want to show the racists that we will not be divided."

More than 600 people came together in the suburb of Saint Denis.



A MOBILISING meeting for the 21 March demonstration in Hackney, east London, last week

Anti-racists worldwide plan to march

ANTI-RACIST PROTESTS are set to take place across the world on 21 March.

Thousands will march in cities across Europe and as far afield as Australia and South Korea.

The demonstration planned in Paris comes on the back of a local rally against Islamophobia on Friday of last week.

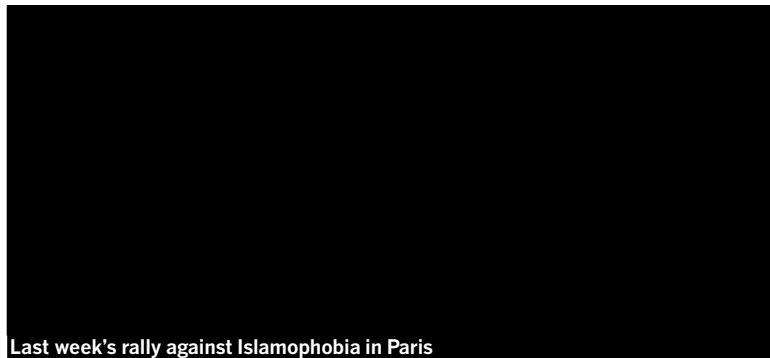
More than 600 people came together in the suburb of Saint Denis.

Islamophobia

They represented a broad range of organisations—including some that previously denied the existence of Islamophobia.

Opposition is growing to the racist clampdown that followed the killings at the Charlie Hebdo magazine and a kosher supermarket in January.

But the French government is looking at banning Muslim headscarves in universities. And the fascist Front National leads the polls for this month's local elections.



Last week's rally against Islamophobia in Paris

The 21 March initiative comes from the Greek anti-fascist movement. They called for solidarity against the threat of Nazi Golden Dawn party—and the brutal repression of migrants trying to enter Europe.

Radical left party Syriza leads the new government. But its vigilance against racism and fascism has slipped under European Union (EU) pressure.

Zoi Konstantopoulou, the Syriza speaker of parliament, said last week that votes would

be unconstitutional unless Golden Dawn MPs were allowed out of jail to take part.

And defence minister Panos Kammenos—who's a member of the right wing Independent Greeks—warned the EU that if it pushes Greece further into crisis more "jihadists" will enter Europe.

In the Spanish state anti-racist protests will take place alongside the latest anti-austerity Marches for Dignity. Dave Sewell

IN BRIEF

Anti-fascist marchers defy calls to 'ignore' racist EDL

AROUND 500 anti-fascists marched through Manchester city centre against the racist English Defence League (EDL) last Saturday.

A huge police operation facilitated the protest by some 200 racists, with metal barriers erected around the city.

Days before the protest some 35 religious and political leaders wrote a letter telling people to "ignore" the EDL. But Unite Against Fascism (UAF) activists urged people to take to the streets.

Nahella Ashraf, a local UAF activist and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) parliamentary candidate for Longsight, told *Socialist Worker*, "It seems that city leaders tried to shut



Protesters march through Manchester city centre

down any opposition.

"They have no recognition of how to beat the fascists. Letting Nazis go unopposed goes against everything we know from history.

"But luckily people saw through it. It was a fantastic day and showed what Manchester is really about."

The day before the demonstration the council voted through a massive budget cuts.

Nahella said, "There weren't any councillors on our march. People were asking how could they afford to put on a march for the EDL when people are facing huge cuts?"

Annette Mackin

Police admit parents didn't know about terror operation

THE parents of three London teenagers assumed to have travelled to Syria to join Isis have demanded a formal apology from the police.

The police claimed the families knew their children were already part of a counter-terrorism investigation.

But cops were forced to retract their earlier claim, after admitting they'd only sent letters to the



Dal Babu

parents via the school students who didn't pass them on.

Fahmida Aziz, the cousin of one of the

school students Kadiza Sultana, explained that she had lost faith in the police. "They have really failed us," she said.

The row over the police's treatment of the families came as a former Muslim chief superintendent denounced the Prevent strategy. Dal Babu said it had become "a toxic brand" and that many Muslims saw it as a form of spying.

Organise against Ukip bigots

UKIP LEADER Nigel Farage was finally forced to speak about the racist party's immigration policy last week.

Farage said Ukip backed a points system to control who can come to Britain.

He said migrants would not be able to claim benefits for five years—and migrants with life-threatening illnesses would not be able to use the NHS.

Ukip also has LGBT people in its sights.

It was forced to distance itself from Christian Soldiers of Ukip, which described a Pride event as an "annual parade of depravity" in a newsletter.

Stand up to Ukip activists held a day of action against the party in towns and cities across Britain last Saturday.

Glenroy Watson

from the RMT railworkers' union said, "When you seek high office in parliament usually it's about representing all of the people.

"However it appears it is acceptable by the media and some of the public to put forward political rhetoric that is designed to create division." standuptoukip.org

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

WORKERS CAN END THE AUSTERITY OFFENSIVE

THE HEWAR of the billboard posters has begun and the media is stuffed with arguments about the TV election debates.

But all this froth shouldn't distract from the Tories' sinister plans if they win May's general election.

The Tories have made no secret of the fact that they would stick to their brutal austerity drive. In fact, they're planning £70 billion of even more devastating cuts if they get in again.

They don't even claim the cuts are necessary to keep the economy afloat—they're actually aiming to have a budget surplus.

The price will be paid by the tens of thousands who'll lose their jobs and have their pay, pensions and local services slashed.

The Tories have been using the global crash as cover for attacks on workers' living standards and the welfare state that previous Tory governments could have only dreamt about.

Yet in the face of this, all Labour is willing to offer is its own version of austerity.

Shadow chancellor Ed Balls promises "sensible spending cuts" that will be "fair". So instead

of 30,000 jobs going in the civil service, Labour says it would cut a mere 20,000.

Labour's spending cuts will still be upwards of £7 billion and it wouldn't close any of David Cameron's planned 500 Free schools.

There needs to be a left alternative in the general election that rejects austerity and racism.

That's why the Socialist Workers Party is supporting parliamentary candidates who are part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Those imposing austerity are never the ones who suffer under its burden.

Some even benefitted from

The Tories have been using the crisis to justify attacks on our living standards

when many migrants came to Britain from the Commonwealth, there was full employment.

At the same time Britain funded an expanding NHS and embarked on a programme of council house building. Now we are told there is no money for such things.

In reality, there is more than enough money in Britain for all workers to have higher living standards.

The Tories and the bosses want us to blame migrants for low pay, unemployment, lack of housing

the crisis. A new Social Market Foundation report shows that the richest 20 percent's wealth rose by a staggering 64 percent in the last decade.

The poorest 20 percent became 57 percent poorer during the same period.

The same report pointed out that, since the crisis began, people have faced the "longest period of falling wages since records began".

So the problem is not a lack of wealth.

It is just that wealth is ever more concentrated in the hands of a rich minority—and they will do everything they can to hang onto it.

That's why the rich employ armies of accountants and lawyers.

They need help to stash their cash in Swiss bank accounts, pretend companies and off shore trusts to avoid paying taxes—taxes which could fund public services.

Austerity is not inevitable—it's part of a ruling class offensive. The rich are trying to rescue their crisis-ridden system by squeezing workers to boost their profits.

But workers have the power to end austerity—and the system it is trying to save.

IMMIGRANTS WELCOME

OUR RULERS want us to panic about the fact that more Romanians and Bulgarians are coming to Britain.

They say if "too many" migrants come there won't be enough resources to give everyone a decent standard of living.

But the number of migrants in Britain doesn't determine our standard of living.

There was mass unemployment in Britain in the 1930s—and virtually no immigration into Britain. In the 1950s and 1960s,

and overstretched services.

Yet they're the ones slashing services, refusing to build council homes, sacking workers and imposing pay cuts.

Workers fighting back together can win higher wages and defend jobs and services for all working class people—migrant and British-born.

The rich scapegoat migrants to divide us and weaken our struggle. We have to resist racist scapegoating and unite against our real enemy.

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RAGE AGAINST RACISM

Demonstrate on Sat 21 March

London

Assemble 12 noon
Portland Place

Glasgow

Assemble 11am
George Square

Cardiff

Assemble 11:30am
Clare Gardens,
Riverside

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Netanyahu blusters as Israel is sidelined

ISRAELI PRIME minister Binyamin Netanyahu makes a habit of imposing himself as an uninvited guest.

His presence at the head of the march in Paris after the Charlie Hebdo killings—despite the efforts of French president Francois Hollande—gave the lie to its organisers' avowed defence of democratic ideals.

Netanyahu was at it again last week. He addressed a joint session of the US Congress, despite the opposition of US president Barack Obama and the Democratic Party. It was a partisan affair. For the Republicans, who now control both houses of Congress, this was a way of snubbing Obama.

Netanyahu is facing a closely fought election in Israel. So he hoped a rapturous reception—first from Zionist lobbying organisation the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (Aipac), then from the Republicans at Congress—would make him look good back home.

His ostensible aim was to campaign against the deal that the US and five other “world powers” (China, Russia, Britain, France, and Germany) are negotiating with Iran over its nuclear programme. As US commentator Jon Stewart pointed out, Netanyahu has been crying wolf—warning that Iran is on the verge of having nuclear weapons—since the 1990s.

The Iranians rightly called him a hypocrite, since Israel has around 200 nuclear warheads.

There are divisions about the negotiations both in Iran and the US. The Republicans echo Netanyahu's accusation that by allowing Iran to continue its civilian nuclear programme Obama is giving the Islamic Republican regime leeway to develop nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, Iranian president Hassan Rouhani faces criticism for going soft on the “Great Satan”. Netanyahu's opposition is probably helpful in this context.

Netanyahu is getting domestic flak from antagonising Israel's main patron. Some 200 ex-generals signed a letter denouncing his trip to Washington.

Destructive

Meir Dagan, former chief of the Israeli intelligence service Mossad, said recently that Netanyahu's policies are “destructive to the future and security of Israel”.

The row underlines that the relationship between the US and Israel is more complex than is suggested by those who argue that Aipac and the rest of the Zionist lobby effectively dictate US policy in the Middle East.

The US finds it useful to have in Israel a heavily armed client in a strategic region. But that doesn't mean that it isn't willing to put pressure on Israel.

For example, in 1992 George Bush senior's administration announced it wouldn't provide Israel with around £7 billion in housing loan guarantees because the government of Yitzhak Shamir refused to negotiate with the Palestinians.

The historian Avi Shlaim wrote, “They took the bold step of indicating to the Israeli electorate that, if they wanted American financial support to continue, they should change their government.” Shamir lost the subsequent election.

Later US administrations have been more cowardly. But George Friedman of intelligence website Stratfor has argued Israel is facing a long term shift in US strategy in the Middle East. “Having failed to pacify Afghanistan or Iraq, the United States has come to the conclusion that wars of occupation are beyond American capacity. It is prepared to use air power and very limited ground forces in Iraq, for example,” he wrote.

“The United States wants regional powers to deal with issues that threaten their interests more than American interests. At the same time, the United States does not want any one country to dominate the region.

“Therefore, it is in the American interest to have multiple powers balancing each other. There are four such powers: Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel.”

Obama has concluded that it's better to deal with Iran's nuclear programme through negotiations than a war that is probably unwinnable. And the US and Iran have a common interest in beating Isis, which is rabidly hostile to Shia Muslims.

This doesn't foreshadow a straightforward US-Iran axis. The US also needs Turkey and Saudi Arabia, both ruled by Sunni Muslim regimes that want to overthrow Iran's Syrian client, Bashar al-Assad.

But, for all his swaggering, Netanyahu has become just a pawn in a much bigger game.

Parents and teachers blast Cameron's free school plan

The Tories' promise to build 500 new free schools if they win the election would be a disaster, writes **Sadie Robinson**

THE TORIES showed their nasty side yet again this week by threatening “at least” 500 more free schools if they win May's general election.

David Cameron claimed this would mean “more good places for your children”. But free schools aren't designed to benefit children—they are geared towards privatising education.

Campaigners in Brixton, south London, held a protest at short notice in response. They gathered at Trinity Academy, a free school that has opened on the site of Lambeth College.

Protester Andrea Gibbons told Socialist Worker, “Free schools are a way of transferring money from public education to private education. And free schools have failed all around Britain.”

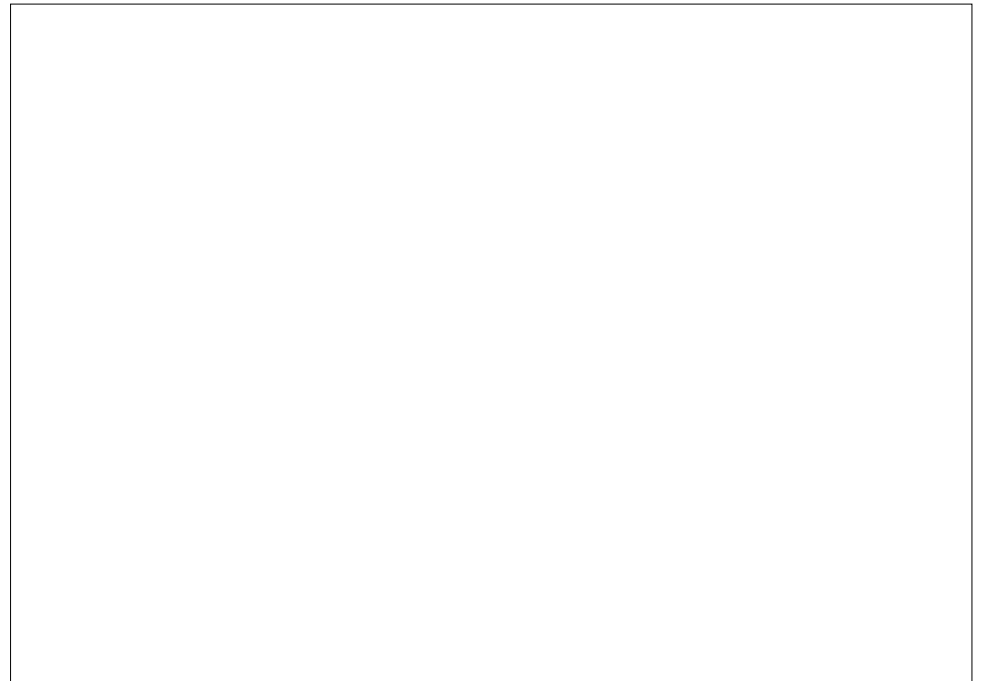
Damage

Akua Rugg has taught at Lambeth College since 1990. She said free schools damage education.

“The ruling class get a very broad education,” she told Socialist Worker. “But the working class is railroaded into very narrow choices.”

Free schools are privately run but funded by the government. They are “free” to ignore the national curriculum and set their own admissions policies.

Free schools took half the number of children



DAVID CAMERON wants to privatise education through free schools (above) Lambeth teacher Akua Rugg (left)

as either requiring improvement or inadequate. Three were closed or taken over.

Unaccountable

Many people are opposed to letting unaccountable bodies take over education.

Andrea criticised the consultation process for the new Trinity Academy. “It was a bunch of white men in suits presenting designs,” she said.

“They said it was all very preliminary but then it quickly became set. It was as though a decision had been made and there's nothing you can do about it.”

Campaigners are also concerned that Dennis Sewell, head of Trinity Academy Ltd, is racist. He wrote an article for Spectator magazine

that glorifies Britain bringing “personal hygiene” and “good table manners” to “the natives” in Africa and Asia.

Rahul Patel is a local resident who has also been involved in the campaign against the school.

He told Socialist Worker, “It's despicable that a man like Sewell is allowed to be at the head of an £18 million education project. He has continually made derogatory statements about Asians, Africans and poor people.

“There's no accountability and no scrutiny. Democracy is being wiped out.”

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Tories to axe thousands more civil service jobs

by **ANNETTE MACKIN**

MORE THAN a third of staff at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) face losing their jobs over the next five years if the Tories are elected in May.

Government officials have drawn up plans to slash 30,000 jobs at the DWP, which deals with benefits and pensions.

Jobs have already been slashed since the coalition came in.

The DWP had 121,000 workers in 2010, including job centre staff. Now it's



Pickets in Garston last year

PICTURE: DAVE OWENS

down to 83,000.

Labour also plans to cut 20,000 DWP jobs if it is elected.

The announcement follows an attack on the

workers' PCS union.

Workers in Merseyside have already fought back over proposed job cuts. They struck last year at Garston DWP call centre.

FIGURE IT OUT

38,000

jobs have been cut at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) since 2010

30,000

more DWP jobs are for the chop if the Tories win May's general election

20,000

are to go if Labour gets in

Green conference calls for end to Tory austerity

by NICK CLARK in Liverpool

SOME 1,300 people attended the Green Party spring conference in Liverpool last weekend. It was the largest conference the Greens have ever held.

Green Party membership has exploded over the past few months.

It has grown from a party of fewer than 20,000 members in September last year to more than 55,500 members.

Many new members see the Greens as an alternative to the mainstream parties.

Kelly, one of the delegates, is a student from Liverpool University who left the Labour Party to join the Greens.

She told Socialist Worker, "The Labour Party supports austerity measures that disproportionately affect women. And they don't support free education."

Kelly had been on the free education demonstration last year where Caroline Lucas, the Green MP for Brighton Pavilion, spoke. But Labour only plans to cut fees to £6,000 a year.

Kelly said, "I'm involved in organising protests. I want free education—£6,000 isn't good enough."

Bristol hospital porter and Green Party member Will agreed.

He told Socialist Worker, "Labour have abandoned anything that even looks like social democracy."

"The Green Party is much more to the left. When we were on strike in the NHS the Green Party supported us but the Labour Party didn't."

Green Party leader Natalie Bennett said in her opening speech that a large Green vote at the general election would represent a "peaceful political revolution".

Failed

She said the Green Party would "end the failed austerity experiment, end the spiteful blaming of the poor, the sick, the vulnerable for the mistakes of the wealthy".

And a successful motion instructed Green MPs to "do all they can to remove the Conservative Party from government".

It also said that the Greens should negotiate to support other parties after the election without joining a coalition.

But crucially the motion that was passed said that refusing to support austerity should be a "clear and objective red line".

Caroline Lucas told conference that the Greens would seek to enter a "progressive alliance" after the general election in May.

She said, "With the rise of the SNP, Plaid Cymru and our own Green surge, we have the chance to form a new progressive grouping in parliament."



GREEN PARTY leader Natalie Bennett addresses its spring conference

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Delegates were worried that Green MPs would succumb to pressure to agree an austerity budget.

Last week Greens teamed up with Labour to pass an austerity budget through Brighton and Hove City Council, despite opposition from six Green councillors.

Kelly wasn't worried about the Greens supporting austerity. She said, "I don't think the Green Party would do that."

"They're a party of morals and principles. They're against austerity."

But John, a new member from Sunderland, was concerned that the Greens could end up moving to the right.

He told Socialist Worker, "I've seen some things on the members' forums from the Green Party 'old guard' that I would consider quite right wing."

"But I think if the Greens started making cuts or moved to the right, most of the members would quit or resign."



On other pages...

Thousands march for action on climate change >>Page 20

Meet a TUSC candidate

THE TRADE Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) will stand candidates in May's general election to put forward an alternative to racism and austerity.

Tyrrine Rutherford is standing as TUSC candidate for Aberdeen North.

He told Socialist Worker, "If you're working class it's hard to live in Aberdeen. Rents are sky-high and hundreds of new expensive houses are being chucked up while just 2 percent on the council housing list get housed each year."

"There needs to be a socialist voice standing for the working class."

"All the main parties support austerity—they are like window sales people all selling the same windows."

Tyrrine said the prospects for work in Aberdeen are low—and poverty is high. "For young people like myself there are just too many crap jobs on minimum wage," he explained.

"You can't afford to live on minimum wage in Aberdeen."

"All people are getting is agency work and zero hours contracts—there's no security."

Tyrrine said that he will use his experiences to fight austerity.

"My girlfriend has been sacked because they say they can't afford to take her back on after maternity leave," he added.

"I want to fight for the rights of everyone but particularly young workers and encourage them to join trade unions."

Go to tusc.org.uk for more details



Tyrrine Rutherford

SCOTLAND

What happened to college cash?

QUESTIONS ARE being raised about cash hoarded by Scottish college bosses during a time of unprecedented cuts to further education (FE) funding.

These include pay freezes at colleges, a drop in lecturer numbers, course cuts and a reduction in student numbers.

In late 2013 evidence provided to the Scottish parliament's Public Audit Committee showed cash reserves at colleges totalled £214 million.

But Socialist Worker understands that £99 million of that money has effectively been transferred away from public scrutiny, according to information received by Scottish teachers' union EIS.

This raises questions about the other £115 million.

FE colleges in Scotland are state funded, but get over



College lectures on strike last year

£200 million a year from private sources including overseas students and commercial activity. Until last April, they were not considered part of the public sector and could spend it however bosses chose.

Now they are bound by public sector rules—which say they cannot hold onto the cash once the financial year ends next month.

A project board including the Scottish government and college bosses was set up to get around this with new "arms length foundations". The £99 million transferred into them is worth about 20 percent of the Scottish government's annual spending on FE colleges.

FIGURE IT OUT

£214 million

is in the cash reserves of FE colleges in Scotland

£99 million

has been transferred to "arms length foundations"

£115 million

the amount left that the EIS union is enquiring about



IN BRIEF

Chile students win on fees

THE CHILEAN government is set to pass a law that includes free university tuition—one of the main demands of the recent student protests.

It comes just months after tuition fees were scrapped in Germany.

But the Chilean reform operates within the constitution imposed by former dictator Augusto Pinochet.

The law means fees will be paid by the state.

And powerful private bosses will still own the universities.

Boko Haram and military clash

THE NIGERIAN Islamist group Boko Haram came under attack from the military of Chad and Niger on Monday of this week.

Boko Haram's leader had appeared on the radio the previous day pledging allegiance to Isis.

But the organisation gets its support because of the war in north eastern Nigeria.

Boko Haram is brutal. But national government forces have killed more locals than it has.

Egyptian regime hangs protester

THE MILITARY-BACKED regime in Egypt has carried out its first hanging of 180 mainly Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

A court upheld death sentences against them last month.

The interior ministry announced last Saturday that it had executed Mahmoud Hassan Ramadan Abdel-Nabi.

The cases relate to the period of mass protests after the fall of Brotherhood president Mohamed Mursi in July 2013.

The authorities claim a police station near Cairo was attacked.

The statement referred to the hanging as the "first to be executed of those involved in violent clashes".

FIGURE IT OUT

180

Protesters sentenced to death by the Egyptian regime

1,000

Muslim Brotherhood supporters killed in Rabaa Square after fall of president Mohamed Mursi

18

Protesters killed by Egyptian police in January this year

Health strike planned as rulers pressure Syriza

by DAVE SEWELL

HEALTH WORKERS in two Athens hospitals were set to walk out on Wednesday of this week and march on the Ministry of Health.

It will be the first public sector strike in Greece since radical left party Syriza won January's election.

Costas Kadarachias is a union secretary at Aghios Savvas cancer hospital. He told Socialist Worker, "Most of the workers here voted for Syriza to stop the austerity that has been imposed on Greece."

"But we know we can't wait for the government. Our problems are getting worse every day—hospitals are understaffed, underfunded, with many facilities closed."

Syriza's leadership made promises to its voters—of major reforms to reverse the impact of austerity—but made promises to its creditors too. It agreed last month to continue with austerity measures in order to get an extension on Greece's bailout.

Restore

The first law passed through parliament last week will restore electricity to 150,000 of the poorest households. That will make a big difference—but it's half the number promised.

Last week the European Central Bank (ECB) ruled out allowing Greek banks to lend the government money.

Panos Garganas, editor of Socialist Worker's sister paper Worker's Solidarity, explained, "This is how they are keeping the pressure up. It gives the message that there will be no funding for Greece unless it continues with austerity. And Syriza has no answer."

"Finance minister Yanis

HOSPITAL WORKERS in Athens march on Ministry of Health in 2012

Varoufakis has made comments in the Italian press about a referendum on austerity. But this is an empty threat. There would be a lot of opposition, and it would cause problems for the government."

The government has resorted to borrowing money from pension funds, and the reserves of hospitals and public services as a short term measure.

These were the same bodies hit in 2012 when the government effectively defaulted on some of its debt

to public bodies while banks were bailed out. Raiding their reserves again risks squeezing already cash-strapped services.

Syriza presented the measure as a way of strengthening its hand in negotiations. But it could have the opposite effect.

"It moves the risk of any default away from the ECB and onto Greek pensions and hospitals," Panos argued.

Even the previous Tory-led government had to recognise the

damage its cuts had done to hospitals. Its budget included vague plans to create new jobs in health. Workers hope their strike will make sure Syriza turns them into reality.

Costas said, "We hope to show the way to other workers. With the left in government we need to be out on the streets."

"There will be a lot of negotiations with the government and the banks and the European Union."

"The important thing is that workers have the last word."

UNITED STATES

Cop kills black teenager

PROTESTS ERUPTED in Madison, Wisconsin, last weekend following the police killing of another unarmed black man.

Tony Robinson was shot on Friday of last week by officer Matt Kenny who forced his way into an apartment after saying he received reports of a disturbance. He shot 19 year old Tony who later died in hospital.

No gun or other weapon was found at the scene.

The killing came just days after the Department of Justice (DoJ) said it would not prosecute officer Darren Wilson.

Wilson is the white cop

who shot dead unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, last year.

A damning DoJ report published last week showed officers in Ferguson target black people for stop and search more frequently and have sent each other racist emails.

Thousands turned out to hear president Obama speak in Selma, Alabama, to commemorate 50 years since civil rights marchers were attacked by police.

But anger was widespread, with people holding signs calling for justice for black deaths.

Annette Mackin

UKRAINE

Rivalry tears Ukraine apart

BRITISH FOREIGN secretary Philip Hammond has said that the West will impose more sanctions on Russia if separatist forces in Ukraine launch another offensive.

Russia's economy has been hit badly by sanctions and the falling price of oil.

The Ukrainian government and separatists had begun to stick to a ceasefire agreed last month.

But the conflict in Ukraine will not be solved by the ceasefire, which only temporarily freezes the stand off and entrenches nationalist divisions. Imperialist rivalry between the West and Russia is tearing Ukraine apart. Only revolt from below can stop it.

Foreign secretary Philip Hammond

Support this policy

I FIND it surprising that the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) does not include support for a "citizen's income" as one of its policies.

"Citizen's income" is "an unconditional, automatic and non-withdrawable payment to each individual as a right of citizenship". It has been adopted by the Green Party, as well as by Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain and the Cosatu union in South Africa.

The left should embrace the policy. It is not a panacea, but it will help transform the lives of ordinary people for the better. For more information go to citizensincome.org

John Cunningham
Address withheld

Fight canal evictions

CANAL & River Trust (CRT) is planning to bring in a new policy for boaters without a home mooring on 1 May. This would see them refusing to re-license all boats that don't move "far enough or often enough". They haven't stated how far is far enough.

CRT's policy is effectively proposing to evict thousands of live-aboard boaters without home moorings from its waterways.

Last week about 100 boaters joined a National Bargee Travellers Association legal meeting in London. Many seemed ready to fight for their homes.

Marcus Trower
Deputy Chair, National Bargee Travellers Association

Sign the petition online at bit.ly/1FdjkdT

Causes of child abuse lie within capitalism

MEDIA COVERAGE of child sexual abuse such as the Jimmy Savile atrocities and various recent "paedophile rings" has been insufficient.

Of course, it's horrible that children have been abused. And it's shocking that authorities covered up the abuse.

In a capitalist world where we are objectified and turned into mechanised units of labour, people can become estranged from their humanity and unable



THEMBELIHLE PROTESTERS celebrate after being bailed

'Thanks for your solidarity', say released South Africans

WE LIVE in Thembelihle, a squatter camp near Soweto. On Thursday 26 February there was a protest about housing and basic services.

Many people in South Africa are tired of waiting and there are a lot of protests.

The police shot at us and 34 were arrested. We were charged with public violence.

The magistrate granted us bail of 1,000 rand each after five days.

We are poor, many of us do not have jobs or an income. Some of us have young children. Six of us are minors.

We would like to thank socialist comrades in Britain who sent money to show solidarity.

Now we have to fight this case and continue our struggle.

Nditsheni Mokuhulo, Nhlanhla Ntombela, Kabelo Nzuza, Karel Mere, Glen Mhlanga,

Farouk Medisone, Emmanuel Sibanda, Nhlakanipho Lukhele, Katey Shabanu, Mothelo Innocent, Mateo Sithole, Leonard Phathi, Senzo Lerotholi, Gift Kokoeng, Boitumelo Leshabane, Nomsa Priscilla Morapeni, Bafana Khumalo, Refiloe Mangau, Molatalane Mobama, Simpehi Grace Thulale, Nandipha Doyana, Mphonyana Ntlateng, Lindiwe Dube, Boipelo Konyane, Phumlani Msengana, Patrick Mabuza, Nomsa Mokoena, Priscilla Nomsa Morapeni, Tebogo Maruping, Daniel Mokone, Pitso Tladi, Xolani Majola
South Africa

●COMRADES IN the Socialist Workers Party raised £700 within 24 hours towards the bail to get protesters arrested in South Africa out of jail.

On 21 March our comrades in South Africa will be holding a day of national action against police

brutality on the anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 when police killed 69 protesters.

This is the same day we will be joining Stand Up to Racism protests in Britain.

The bailed protesters face charges of public violence that could lead to ten years in prison.

They urgently need money to fight these charges and to continue their struggle against state violence and for jobs, houses and services.

We show solidarity in whatever way we can. Get your trade union branch to make a donation if possible or donate any money you can.

Bridget Parsons
Birmingham

Anyone who can help should contact Charlie Kimber at charlie@swp.org.uk

Just a thought...

Labour is finished here

I WENT to Labour-controlled Barnsley Council's budget meeting and saw every single councillor vote for cuts.

They voted to raise the council tax by 1.9 percent. This will hit the poorest people in our community.

They also voted for all the children's centres to be closed, and all the mental health resources.

Labour is finished in our town.

Julie Ingram
Barnsley

Anglers need tidal lagoons

ANGLERS have expressed concerns about the new tidal lagoon power plants. They are worried about fish migration.

I'm a passionate angler myself and I don't see these lagoons as a problem.

If we don't adopt renewable energy technology like these lagoons in the near future we may not have much of a planet left, let alone migratory fish.

Gary MacLachlan
Greenock

Miners could have won

LAST WEEK marked 30 years since the end of the Miners' Strike. I was active throughout the strike as a Socialist Workers Party member.

The strike started full of confidence in the power of the union.

But the TUC failed to support the strike.

We could have won if we had any support from them and the unions around the country. But support action was restricted to organisations such as ourselves.

Neil Constant
Plymouth

Domestic abuse help

I HAVE created an easy to digest guide on the legal protection available for anybody experiencing domestic abuse.

I thought that it might be something you would be interested reading. It is at lakerlegal.co.uk/infographic/legal-protection-from-domestic-violence

Lilly Watson
London

Palestine solidarity at Glasgow Uni

THE ISRAELI ambassador to Britain Daniel Taub spoke at Glasgow University on Monday of last week.

Students were only told there was a "high profile" speaker and that we had to register in advance.

A protest was organised when students found out who it was. I tried to attend the meeting, but even

though I had registered, people on the door said my name was not in the list.

I study human rights at the university and I am shocked that it invited such a person in such secrecy.

People are dying in Palestine on a daily basis. This is against human rights.

Solidarity with Palestine!
Pinar Aksu
Glasgow University

The protest against the Israeli ambassador at Glasgow University



Labour attempts to halt its decline

Raymie Kiernan reports from Scottish Labour's special conference in Edinburgh

THE MOOD was sombre at the Labour Party's Scottish conference last Saturday, as speakers harked back to the past instead of looking to the future.

The one-day event was organised to vote through rule changes proposed by its new leader, Blairite Jim Murphy.

His plan was to wrap the party in a Saltire flag and revise its aims to "work for the patriotic interest of the Scottish people".

Labour claimed this was its biggest ever conference in Scotland, although far more people were observing than were able to vote.

And there is bad news all round for Murphy.

He was recently attacked by STUC leader Grahame Smith for having "nothing at all to say" about the role of unions.

And new polls show the Scottish National Party (SNP) could win 56 of Scotland's 59 MPs in May's general election.

Pollster John Curtice said, "The SNP tide appears to be more or less every bit as strong in No voting Labour areas as it was previously shown to be in Yes voting ones."

Labour's support has plummeted since the independence referendum last year. Yet its leaders fail to grasp the profound change in Scotland's political landscape.

Many working class people voted for independence out of a desire for social justice.

The sight of Labour leaders campaigning so vigorously with the Tories against a Yes vote left huge bitterness. Many now want to see them punished, even if that fuels support for the SNP

Labour leaders fail to grasp the profound change in Scotland's political landscape

Electing Jim Murphy was a disaster

So electing a Westminster establishment politician like Murphy as leader was a disaster. He is part of the problem for Yes voters who hoped for an end to austerity.

Murphy's "patriotism" rule change was comfortably carried by 69 percent at last Saturday's conference. It wasn't clear how all the union affiliates voted but the only speech made against it was from a Unite union delegate.

Labour isn't losing support to the SNP because of a surge in nationalism but because Nicola Sturgeon's party has crafted an image of challenging Westminster austerity.

Labour is not seen as an alternative to the Tories while the SNP is—even though it is in favour of austerity.

This view will be compounded by the revelation that Murphy's chief of staff thinks it was "a good thing" that Margaret Thatcher "did what she did".

And his support for more privatisation will do little to convince former voters to come back to the party in May.

Big rows are now breaking out about where Labour's election cash is being spent. One MP is reported as saying Labour should "forget about anywhere west of the Lothians".

Another Labour hopeful challenging the SNP in Dundee has publicly declined £1,000 from Tony Blair.

It would be premature to write off Labour in Scotland. But there is no doubt its leadership has a credibility problem in working class areas and the unions.

The danger is the left fails to offer a genuine unified alternative, leaving the field open to the SNP because the ground is shifting fast.

After the referendum shook up Scotland, council cuts and a general election have got workers asking

Who will speak for Glasgow?



GLASGOW IS a key battleground in May's general election. Recent polls show that Labour could lose all but one of its seven MPs there to the Scottish National Party (SNP).

Support for Labour has plummeted since last year's independence referendum, when the party officially backed a No vote.

The Yes vote mirrored the map of poverty across Scotland as people looked for change. And almost a third of Scotland's most deprived areas are in Glasgow.

Now, sick of years of Labour agreeing in principle with Tory austerity, many once loyal Labour supporters want a new political home.

Unison union member Chrissie works for Glasgow Association for Mental Health (GamH). She told Socialist Worker, "I thought I would always be a Labour voter."

"I'm not anymore because of what I've seen happening in Glasgow. I just can't vote for that anymore."

Chrissie was referring to a recent budget meeting of Labour-run Glasgow City Council that voted through £29 million of cuts.

This included a 40 percent cut to GamH.

Battles against cuts to social care have been at the forefront of resistance in Glasgow.

Almost a fifth of the city's working age population receive incapacity benefit—more than any other city

in Britain. And half of claimants have mental health problems.

Marion is co-secretary of the Glasgow Care Crisis group. She told Socialist Worker, "The council has cut social care budgets by millions in the past few years."

"It has shut learning disability centres and mental health drop in centres. It has cut elderly, addiction, homelessness and mental health services."

Chaos

"It has created chaos and misery for our most vulnerable citizens."

Tom, who uses GamH services, said there is a disconnect between politicians and voters.

"They think services can be run short term without resources," he told Socialist Worker. "But that's not how it works."

Chrissie said the recent cuts won't be the last attack on mental health. They certainly weren't the first.

Allie used the Charlie Reid Centre that she said was "the first to get hit". She explained that the council started charging people money to use the drop-in centre and they couldn't afford to pay.

It eventually closed last May leaving hundreds of people "cut adrift".

Paul also used the centre. He told Socialist Worker the change to funding was "just a disguise for cuts".

Chrissie said, "When they closed Charlie Reid part of the rationale was

that people using it would fall neatly into services provided by GamH. One year on, GamH is being cut."

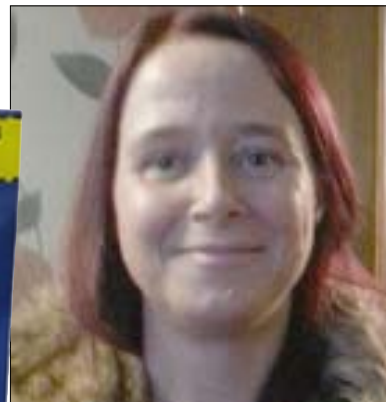
The so-called logic behind cuts to mental health services in Glasgow is all too familiar across Britain.

Labour and Tory governments have accelerated the introduction of the market into public services. Profits and costs come before quality of care.

But the way that people feel the council is treating them illustrates a much deeper attitude towards the Labour Party in Scotland.

As Tom put it, "It's their arrogance".

He said this was clear when senior union officials, shop stewards, service users and workers delivered a 10,000-strong petition



Scottish Labour leader Jim Murphy (top), his party's NHS leaflet—and the private healthcare ad that was mailed out with it (left), and Kay, who thinks MPs are out of touch (above)



Marion, Tom, Paul and Allie (main picture, clockwise from top left, PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN), A protest against cuts in Glasgow last month (top PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN), A rally for Scottish independence in Glasgow last year (above, PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER)

against the cuts to GamH. "They wouldn't even walk downstairs and accept it," he said.

Protesters at the time heard Scotland's largest Unison union branch secretary say, "I'm thinking of leaving Labour and tearing up my party card."

She'd been in the party for 30 years. Another union official swiftly announced that they had already left.

The Labour council blames the SNP at Holyrood for cuts to Glasgow's budget. The SNP in turn blames Westminster.

Chrissie said, "We need accountability from Glasgow's politicians."

Choice

"They had a choice. Council unions proposed a no-cuts budget, said borrow money if we have to, we don't need to accept austerity."

"Instead they said, 'We'd love not to do this, but they made us do it.'"

Paul said politicians opposing austerity in words but not deeds are "like conscientious objectors going to war".

The thirst for an alternative to austerity drove many working class people to vote for independence.

Since then the SNP has benefitted most from Labour's decline. It now claims 93,000 members—around one in 50 of the adult population of Scotland.

Allie said the SNP is giving people hope for change. "That's flowed

directly from the referendum," she said.

Chrissie has also joined the party. She said its "commitments to social justice seem to be there".

She added, "A lot of my colleagues say, 'I'm happy to give them a chance. I've seen what it's like under the Tories and Labour—I know what I'll get.'"

The SNP could be set for an historic victory in May. But it might have a difficult job holding on to its new recruits in Scotland's charged political atmosphere.

Kay was one of tens of thousands who joined the SNP after the referendum. But it didn't keep her.

She explained to Socialist Worker, "The weekend I joined, their system crashed."

"They contacted me saying I had

After I joined the SNP it started coming out that it was making cuts. That's not a party I want to be part of

to rejoin. But then it started coming out how the SNP is willing to implement cuts. That's not a party I want to be part of.

"I want to be part of a party that is going to fight for a better future for my children."

Kay has been campaigning for Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate Angela McCormick in Glasgow North.

"She's the anti-austerity candidate in my area," she said.

"Basically everything that's shaming our society, such as the bedroom tax, racism, bankers' bonuses, she's fighting against it."

MPs' recent comments about being unable to survive on their salaries showed again the gap between politicians and voters.

It angered Kay. "They should come into the real world and try and live on the benefits that a single parent like me is supposed to live on with two children," she said.

"They'd see that it's not possible. They haven't got a clue."

John has also been campaigning for TUSC. "I've been a member of GamH for the last two years," he said.

"I'd never been interested in politics really—the first time I voted was at the referendum when I voted Yes."

"But looking at the cuts and the effect on the most vulnerable people, I had to get involved."

Challenge

Socialist politician Tommy Sheridan has argued for people to lend their vote to the SNP in May. He has joined others on the left who have argued to put an anti-austerity challenge on hold until next year's Scottish elections.

John said they're wrong. "You just have to look at SNP council cuts in Dundee or Edinburgh," he said. "They're doing the same as every other party."

He says TUSC's no cuts message is going down well.

"People are fed up with the same old thing. Politicians say what they think you want to hear to get your vote and then do what suits them."

Allie agreed. "Scotland is basically saying we don't want to go back to what we had before. I'm not a member of any party now but many years ago I was secretary of a trades council and in Labour."

But she said, "Labour now is the complete anathema to what it used to be."

"Jim Murphy is an insult to what Labour has been in the past."

Allie said campaign groups should organise election hustings so politicians don't get an easy ride.

"Whether it's SNP, Labour or the Greens we need to pin these slick politicians down on how they are going to stop the cuts," she said.

"And the unions have an important part to play in putting pressure on them."

Tom added, "Everybody wants to protect the welfare state."

"It's ours by right, it's not something that's been handed down or given to us. All of our parents have fought for this."

"What we have to argue with these politicians is that it's non-negotiable—and they won't get away with dismantling it."

Raymie Kiernan
Chrissie spoke to Socialist Worker in a personal capacity

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

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To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7819 1170 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

CAMBRIDGE

Podemos and the struggle against austerity

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
12 Jesus Lane, CB5 8BA

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Can we stop climate change?

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
The Snug, Ma Cameron's,
6-8 Little Belmont St,
AB10 1JG

BARNLEY

What are the roots of Isis?

Thu 19 Mar, 6.30pm,
YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

From Selma to

Ferguson—the fight for civil rights in the US

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
Priory Rooms,
Quaker Meeting House,
40 Bull St, B4 6AF

BOLTON

Why is the Labour Party so right wing?

Wed 25 Mar, 6.30pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRADFORD

Putin, Ukraine and the West—are we heading for another Cold War?

Wed 18 Mar, 7pm,
Equity Centre,
Perkin House,
82 Grattan Rd, BD1 2LU

BRISTOL: SOUTH

Lessons from the 1871 Paris Commune

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
The Robin Hood,
56 St Michael's Hill,
BS2 8DX

CARDIFF

The myth of personal life under capitalism

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace, CF24 4HX

CHELMSFORD

The roots of racism

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

CHESTERFIELD

Capitalism, class and inequality. How do we deal with the 1 percent?

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Market Halls,
Market Place, S40 1PB

COLCHESTER

How does popular culture affect political ideas?

Tue 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Odd One Out,
28 Mersea Rd, CO2 7ET

COVENTRY

From Selma to

Ferguson—the fight for civil rights in the US

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

DERBY

Putin, Ukraine and the West—are we heading for another Cold War?

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next to
Britannia Mill), DE22 3BL

DORCHESTER

Syriza and socialist strategy

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Goldies Bar,
36 High East St,
DT1 1HN

DUDLEY

Fighting back—the US working class in the 1930s

Wed 18 Mar, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St,
Stourbridge, DY8 1EP

SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS

50 YEARS SINCE HIS ASSASSINATION The legacy of Malcolm X

BRIGHTON

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St,
BN1 1AF

DONCASTER

Wed 18 Mar, 7pm,
Women's Centre,
21 Cleveland St,
DN1 3EH

GLASGOW: NORTH

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
O'Neill's in Merchant Square,
71 Albion St,
G1 1NY

LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

NOTTINGHAM

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

DUNDEE

How radical are the Greens?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

The revolutionary ideas of Vladimir Lenin

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria Terrace,
EH1 2JL

ESSEX

To vote or not to vote?

Thu 2 Apr, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd,
Chelmsford, CM1 2QL

EXETER

Syriza and socialist strategy

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
New Horizon Cafe,
47 Longbrook St,
EX4 6AW

GLASGOW: SOUTH

How radical are the Greens?

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Govanhill Baths,
99 Calder St, G42 7RA

HARLOW

Why the working class?

Thu 26 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys,
CM18 6BX

IPSWICH

Why we say that workers have the power to change the world

Tue 7 Apr, 7pm,
Labour Club,
33-35 Silent St, IP1 1TF

KIRKCALDY

30 years on—how the Miners' Strike could have won

Mon 6 Apr, 7.30pm,
Betty Nicol's pub,
297 High St,
KY1 1JL

LANCASTER

From civil rights to Ferguson—the legacy of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane,
LA1 1TX



LEAMINGTON SPA

How real is the economic recovery?

Thu 2 Apr, 7pm,
The Fox and Vivian,
32 Clarendon Ave,
CV32 4RZ

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Is class relevant today?

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

Syriza and socialist strategy

Wed 18 Mar, 7pm,
Brink Cafe,
21 Parr St (near Concert
Square), L1 4JN

LONDON: BRENT & HARROW

Syriza and the Prevent strategy

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Pepperpot Centre,
1a Thorpe Close,
Ladbroke Grove (very close
to the station), W10 5XL

LONDON: BRIXTON

From Selma to Ferguson—the legacy of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near
Effra Rd, facing Windrush
Square), SW2 1EP

LONDON: EALING

From coal mines to call centres—how has the working class changed?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
W3 Gallery,
185 High St, Acton, W3 9DJ

LONDON: HORNSEY AND WOOD GREEN

What is the real tradition of International Women's Day?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Indian Cultural Centre,
9 Clarendon Rd, N8 0DD

LONDON: KINGSTON

The revolutionary ideas of Leon Trotsky

Wed 18 Mar, 7pm,
Kingston Quaker Centre,
Fairfield East, KT1 2PT

LONDON: LEWISHAM

From Selma to Ferguson—civil rights in the US

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community
and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd (near
Greenwich main line and
DLR Station), SE10 8JA

LONDON: SOUTHWARK

Do we need system change to stop climate change?

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
Snug Room, The Grand Union,
26 Camberwell Grove (off
Camberwell Church St),
SE5 8RE

LONDON: TOTTENHAM

How do we stop capitalism destroying the planet?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Kitabevi Cafe,
410 Tottenham High Rd,
N17 9JB

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

How radical are the Greens?

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Oxford House, Derbyshire St
(opp Bethnal Green Rd
Tesco), E2 6HG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

What do socialists say about the EU?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd
(off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

Racism and fascism on the rise in Europe—how do we stop the far right?

Wed 18 Mar, 7pm,
Chorlton Library (side door),
Manchester Rd,
M21 9PN

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

Isis and counter revolution—a Marxist analysis

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

The economic recovery—who benefits?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Food Factory,
884 Stockport Rd,
M19 3BN

MEDWAY

How can we defend education against the market?

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Conference room,
Riverside Creative Hub,
13 Military Rd,
Chatham,
ME4 4JG

NEWCASTLE

Socialists, TUSC and the general election

Thu 19 Mar, 7pm,
The Labour Club,
11 Leazes Park Rd,
NE1 4PF

NORWICH

Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

OXFORD

Selma, the legacy of the Civil Rights movement and the fight against racism

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Restore,
Manzil Way (off Cowley
Rd), OX4 1YH

PORTSMOUTH

Why we say that workers have the power to change the world

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Somerstown Central,
Rivers St,
PO5 4EY

ROTHERHAM

How do we fight Ukip?

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Bridge Inn,
Greasbrough Rd (near the bus
and train stations),
S60 1RB

STALBANS

How radical are the Greens?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Trinity Church Hall (upstairs),
1 Beaconsfield Rd (near St
Albans City station),
AL1 3RD

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Why you should read the Communist Manifesto

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Central United Reformed
Church, 60 Norfolk St (near
the Crucible theatre),
S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

A rebel's guide to Rosa Luxemburg

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
High Street Cafe,
153 High St,
SO14 2BT

SWANSEA

How radical are Plaid Cymru, the SNP and the Greens?

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

International Women's Day—Marxism and the struggle for women's liberation

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Grain Store, King St,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ST

YORK

Why are there so few strikes?

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

LONDON

Eleanor Marx and the Radical Women of the East End

With Siobhan Brown (author of A Rebel's Guide to Eleanor Marx) and Louise Raw (author of Striking A Light: The Bryant and May Matchwomen and Their Place in History)
Wed 18 Mar, 6.30pm,
Jagonari Centre,
183-185 Whitechapel Rd,
E1 1DN.

Hosted by Bookmarks
the socialist bookshop

CONTACT THE SWP

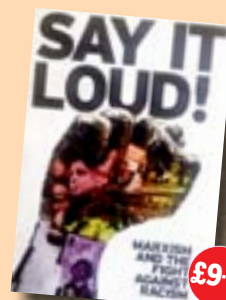
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Images of the miners' strike capture a raw class anger

Beautifully produced new book *In Loving Memory of Work* records the Great Miners' Strike through its art, design and photographs, writes **Dave Gibson**

BARNSELY GRAPHIC designer **Craig Oldham** has produced a powerful and stimulating record of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

His book tells the strike's story by grouping together fascinating photographs and examples of graffiti, cartoons, posters, badges and record sleeves from the time.

Craig is from a striking mining family, and part of the book's power comes from that personal involvement.

His Battle of Orgreave section doesn't just discuss the importance of John Harris's famous photograph of a mounted policeman swinging his baton at a Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) activist. It also includes a photo of his dad being arrested there.

The thoughts of Craig's mother and miner grandfather about the strike sit alongside those of left wing filmmaker Ken Loach and artist Jeremy Deller.

Rosettes

The book takes its title from words on one of many black rosettes that WAPC members left on the steps of 10 Downing Street during a national demonstration in August 1984.

The rosettes dramatically symbolise Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher's desire to destroy the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the mining industry.

Even the book's black dust jacket emphasises that point. It's made out of coal-dust from the muck stack at Barnsley Main Colliery.

The book contains many evocative



'WE won't forget the scabs' graffiti in Armthorpe

PICTURE: BJÖRN RANTIL ©

images. They range from the poster of The Clash's Scargill's Christmas Party gig at the Brixton Academy to the union banners designed by Andrew Turner and Ed Hall.

Turner's disturbing banner for North Selby NUM and Hall's uplifting one for the Unite union's South Yorkshire community branch are both beautifully reproduced.

A personal favourite—and one I had never seen before—is a poster for the Normanton and Altofts Miners Support group.

It's entitled A-Z of a Miner's Wife, starting at "Arthur forever" and finishing with "Zip it up MacGregor. We'll never give in."

I was delighted to see Craig paying tribute to Paul Morton, another political Barnsley graphic designer. Paul's Support The Miners Cards for the radical Leeds Postcards company raised over £30,000 for the strike fund.

I still have one on my pin board where it has been for the last 30 years.

But perhaps the most powerful section is the one exploring the strike's graffiti.

There is the humour of the miners defending the NUM HQ wearing toy police helmets emblazoned with "NUM Snatch Squad".

And there is the raw anger caught in the picture of the march back to work at the end of the strike at Armthorpe colliery in Doncaster.

It shows miners and their supporters marching past a wall emblazoned with a hangman's noose and the slogan "We Won't Forget The Scabs."

This is a beautifully produced book. Buy it—or if you can't afford it, demand your local library gets a copy.

In Loving Memory of Work
Written and curated by Craig Oldham
£29.99

Out now
All proceeds from the purchase of this book will be donated to the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign

Optimistic songs of space say it's worth aiming high

MUSIC

THE RACE FOR SPACE

Public Service Broadcasting
Test Card Recordings and Believe Recordings
publicservicebroadcasting.net
Out now

A CONCEPT album with no major label backing and only vintage spoken word clips for vocals doesn't exactly sound like a hit.

Yet indie band Public Service Broadcasting's *The Race for Space* shows it can be done.

Each song portrays a major step forward, or backward, in space exploration. It goes from the Soviet Union launching



The band dance in the video for single Gagarin

the world's first satellite, Sputnik, to US astronauts landing on the moon.

The music—both electronic and instrumental—lives up

to the story behind the samples.

Cheery brass and guitars swagger with glee as Yuri Gagarin becomes the first man to leave

the earth. Humming and radio static on *Fire in the Cockpit* creates an effective sense of dread as the crew of Apollo One perish on the launch pad.

The album's sense of wonder belies the military competition that drove early space flight.

In some ways, the real race was for nuclear weapons that could still wipe us out.

US president John F Kennedy's stirring words of peace and exploration open the album. Yet this is the man who started the Vietnam War.

The album may seem like it fits neatly into the already tiresome fashion

for post war nostalgia.

But this album is the polar opposite of dreary austerity chic, which seems to limit the scope of the possible one glib poster at a time.

It's also far from militaristic, ending with the starry-eyed and open-ended coda to *Tomorrow*.

There are currently more probes from more nations exploring space than ever before.

And clearly there's an audience for imagining that, for all the horrors of modern capitalism, a bright future is still possible.

Dave Sewell

FILM

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Directed by Desiree Akhavan
Waner Brothers Pictures
Peccadillo Pictures
Out now

APPROPRIATE Behaviour is based around the life of Shirin, a young Persian and bisexual woman living in New York City.

The film's director Desiree Akhavan also stars in the lead role.

It follows the highs and lows that any young person will go through.

But it's also a film about identity and acceptance. It



Desiree Akhavan

shows Shirin accepting her sexuality, and attempting to reconcile with her socially conservative family.

EXHIBITION

GHOSTS: HOW WE LIVE IN THE FUTURE

Fine Art Society
London W1S 2JT
faslondon.com
Free

"REGENERATION" HAS long been a buzzword from the 1950s and 1960s boom to Tony Blair's New Labour.

In this exhibition, six artists present their view of London's decaying, and unrealised modernist projects.

TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

- 1 **A Rebel's Guide to Eleanor Marx**
Siobhan Brown
- 2 **Pride, Politics and Protest**
Laura Miles
- 3 **The Muslims Are Coming**
Arun Kundnani
- 4 **The People—the rise and fall of the working class 1910-2010**
Selina Todd
- 5 **Massacre—the life and death of the Paris Commune**
John Merriman

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AFTER THE agreement between the Eurogroup and the Greek government, there are serious reasons to be worried about the future of Syriza's project.

But any political project of that scale is a bet, with big risks and no guarantees.

And the possibility of Syriza's failure does not cancel its victory.

This is the first time in Europe that a radical left party has won a national election.

There are many tests ahead. But there's already a test behind us, and to really judge what Syriza is doing now we have to ask what brought it this far.

I will focus on four strategic initiatives.

The first is about the specific form of party. Syriza is a pluralist organisation, which includes various sorts of traditions of the radical left, Communists, Trotskyists, Maoists, movementists and some left wing social democrats.

It should be seen as a project for the recomposition of the radical left.

There's a defensive version of what that means. It says that bringing the different pieces of what was a big movement together in a situation of defeat makes them stronger.

There is also a more offensive version, which means working to overcome the very principle of that fragmentation towards a new unification and anti-capitalist political culture.

Transformation

This means accepting that no single political culture on its own has the solution for the problem of social transformation.

Syriza's components aren't just a patchwork. They have to communicate with each other in a mutually critical relationship to explore new paths and practices.

Achieving this unification is still an ongoing process in Syriza.

But it is the only way the left can overcome the trauma of the defeats of the 20th century.

Syriza's second strategic initiative is about how it relates to the movements.

Its spectacular rise cannot be understood without the cycle of powerful social mobilisations that Greece has experienced.

The whole atmosphere of mobilisation, of tension, of polarisation, of violence even, has been nothing like the usual social democratic sequence.

But this has not been a linear process. The 32 days of general strikes, the hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets, haven't stopped a single measure of the austerity "memoranda".

A political perspective was necessary. The awareness of that prepared the ground for the moment of the political initiative.

SYRIZA AND SOCIALIST STRATEGY

PART ONE OF TWO



Stathis Kouvelakis, a leading figure on the left of the Greek radical left party Syriza, argues it has made mistakes but is still our best hope for change



Stathis Kouvelakis

Syriza seized the imagination of the people by providing a political translation that so far had been missing.

In 2012 Syriza proposed a government—not simply a Syriza government but a unitary government of the entire anti-austerity left.

This transformed the situation. It was the political condensation of the movements that was needed to effectively challenge the power of the dominant classes.

“We need new ways of working together to win this decisive battle

This ability to translate the dynamics of social struggle into a political challenge corresponds directly to the party form that translates various components into a single project.

Other left groups paid a high electoral price for rejecting Syriza's call. And the division of the radical left had devastating consequences.

The third strategic initiative is about Syriza's programme. In a way, this is a version of what

are called transitional demands. It seems modest. But it draws the right line in the specific situation—to break with austerity and the “Troika” that's been imposing it.

Big ruptures in history don't happen in the name of grand designs. They happen when seemingly modest demands, corresponding to vital needs, cannot be satisfied without changing the whole social structure.

The Russian Revolution was not made in the name of socialism. It was made for immediate peace, and for land.

Yet it is the most important experiment of socialist revolution in human history.

Fourth is the question of power. There is a strategy that goes back to the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci.

He—like the late Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin—asked why the Russian model of revolution didn't happen in the West.

At the centre of Gramsci's strategy is the relationship between “civil society” and “political society”.

By “civil society”, he meant the broad network of organisations that structure collective life in advanced societies. Political society is the state in the strict sense of the term.

THE MASSES are present in both—but unevenly. The organisations of civil society structure their collective life.

Meanwhile, the state institutions structure their political representation and action.

Gramsci called his strategy “war of position”. Nicos Poulantzas and the Eurocommunist tradition reformulated it into the “democratic road to socialism”.

The working class and popular classes have to appear as a leading force in civil society. And they have to challenge political society and dismantle the repressive core of the state.

In both spheres they have networks and organisations that make their capacity to lead society and to seize real power.

All that is democratic within bourgeois democracy has been the outcome of popular struggles.

So this is a strategy of democratisation in the profound sense of stimulating and enlarging the participation of the working class and of the popular classes in collective life.

The democratic road is not an electoral road. Elections are a necessary step, but not by any means sufficient.

And it's a strategy that doesn't respect the division between the economical and the political, or reduce the political just to parliament.

It is a combination of struggles. The Greek experience provided the terrain to test that strategic hypothesis.

There are risks. Marx and Engels discussed some of this long before Gramsci.

Engels defended the possibility of winning elections as a way of accessing power.

He argued that the dominant classes will react to the advances of socialist parties with counter-revolutionary violence.

But we should leave to them the initiative of breaking with legality and constitutional order.

Engels used the metaphor of the slave-owning Confederate States that rose up against the US in 1861.

This same counter-revolutionary violence was unleashed in Chile in 1973—and in 1967 in Greece.

So any serious process of social change that doesn't defend itself should not be taken seriously.

Another risk is that if the party doesn't transform the state, the state will transform the party.

The state is not neutral—it is a capitalist state that reproduces very specific relations of domination.

We know by experience that this “statistation” of political parties can even begin before the conquest of power. I do not pretend that Syriza has remained untouched by this.

But there is one strategic domain where Syriza has yet to take the initiative it needs to be successful.

Ideological

Europe's ruling classes' ideological hegemony has rested on the narrative of European integration.

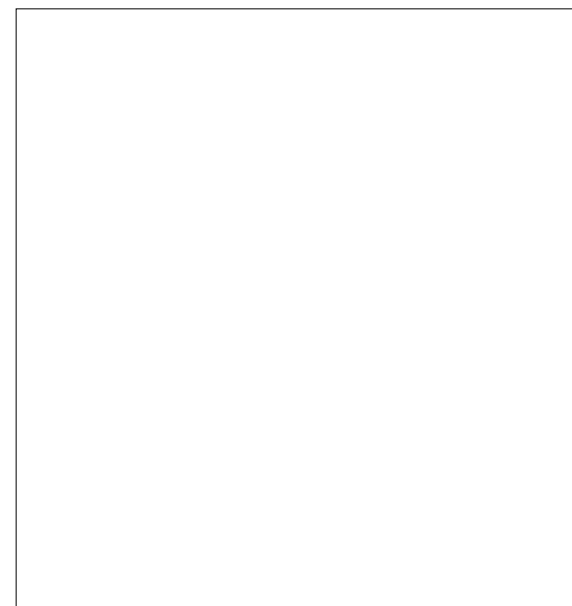
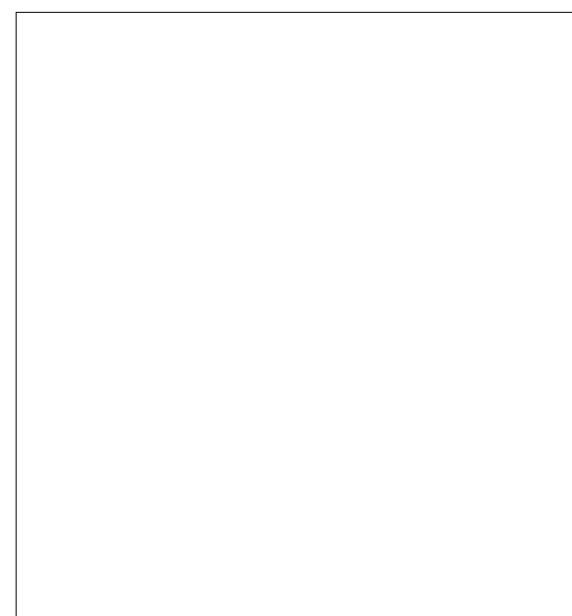
Syriza's belief that it can transform the European institutions from within is an illusion that reinforces this narrative.

The retreat at the Eurogroup was not a betrayal or a sell-out. There was real confrontation. The institutions wanted to bring the Syriza government to its knees—because it is a real threat to them.

But the Syriza government followed a wrong strategy—and to overcome that we need to tell the truth.

And the fact that it presented its retreat almost as a success is in a way more serious than the retreat itself. It prepares the ground for further defeat.

A strategic alternative is possible. This means breaking with



A general strike in Greece in 2010 (top) Police wash away blood and muck after fighting in the Athens Polytechnic Uprising in 1973 during the military junta's reign (above)

the eurozone, or at the very least using that as a threat.

But this will be a very tough battle—and one for the entire radical left. Syriza's hands are now tied, and if there is no change in strategy the risk is of ending with a new version of austerity.

This would allow the right and the far right to reorganise and counter-attack.

This is why we need to be inventive. People who believe in the scenario that “the reformists will fail and the revolutionary vanguard is waiting in the wings to lead the masses to victory” are living outside of reality.

We need to build new ways of working together to win this decisive battle for the future of anti-capitalist forces in Greece and Europe.

There's more online

This article is an edited extract of a debate hosted by the International Socialism (IS) journal.

Stathis Kouvelakis is a leading left wing member of Syriza's central committee. IS journal editor Alex Callinicos will respond in next week's issue. He is on the central committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

Watch the full debate at isj.org.uk or [youtube.com/watch?v=FV2JCTBjlpQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV2JCTBjlpQ)



Will the establishment absorb the opposition?

Vincent Sung looks at the contradictions in Hong Kong's Umbrella movement and some of the challenges it faces in the future

WHAT ARE the prospects for a revived opposition movement in Hong Kong? We will see what impact last year's Umbrella movement has on November's district council elections and the 2016 legislative council elections.

Some of the tens of thousands of people who participated in the occupations are now concentrating on the elections.

But the authorities can use elections to normalise and absorb oppositional forces. Half a million took to the streets in 2003. But that movement was largely absorbed once they joined parties and took part in elections.

Others from the movement are trying to organise alternatives in workplaces and communities. During the occupation many more left wing elements organised among working class people.

They are now debating what happened after the suppression of South Korea's 1980 Gwangju uprising. Most students who took part in that went into the factories. Some are saying we should do that.

Attitudes

I can't see many youth being interested in trade union organising, but perhaps their experience during those 75 days has changed their attitudes.

They became more altruistic and abandoned “central” values—that is the selfish and calculating values of Hong Kong's central financial district.

It was a mass youth movement that was hostile to politicians, even ones known for their support of democracy. The characteristic of the movement was spontaneity, decentralisation and autonomy.

But we can still find some dynamic organising forces with roots in the movement. The first group included

BACK STORY

Hong Kong's Umbrella movement exploded onto the streets last September

● It occupied central Hong Kong for 75 days against political interference from China's government

● When China regained control of Hong Kong from Britain in 1997 it promised “One Country, Two Systems”

● Britain only introduced democratic reforms in Hong Kong in 1992, five years before it had to hand it over

the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS), the student union of the eight local universities, and the secondary school action group Scholarism. They were basically liberal. They talked about democracy, stressing non-violence.

Another group saw a racial conflict between Hong Kongers and people in mainland China. These “nativists”, such as Civic Passion, were the populist right wing of the movement.

“The movement wasn't working class but there were class antagonisms

They strongly attacked left wing groups, HKFS and Scholarism.

But they were militant and it seemed to be a point of principle to fight the police.

A third came from new social movement groups, including left wingers, environmentalists and some anarchists. They stressed social inequality and environmental damage. They also took direct action and fought the police but for them this was tactical, not a matter of principle.

This was not a working class movement, though often workers supported it. But there was an underlying class antagonism.

Occupiers

A recent survey showed that 70 percent of the occupiers were aged 18 to 29. Students made up 30 percent, while 60 percent were professionals or managers.

But most said they came from lower class or lower middle class families.

Generally speaking, most university graduates over the past 20 years could get a good job, a car and a mortgage.

They could climb into an upper social layer. But that is not true any more. Crucial to this is the integration of Hong Kong and China. This has squeezed some layers out to the margins of society.

Since 2008 the polarisation of the rich and poor in Hong Kong has worsened.

This is an edited version of a talk former Hong Kong trade union organiser Vincent Sung gave at the International Socialism China dayschool on 28 February

Plan to 'blame' Hillsborough fans

by SADIE ROBINSON

SENIOR POLICE officers met two days after the Hillsborough disaster and drew up a plan to blame Liverpool fans for the crush, an inquest has heard.

Some 96 Liverpool football fans died as a result of the disaster at the stadium in Sheffield on 15 April 1989.

Former inspector in research and development for South Yorkshire Police Clive Davis gave evidence to fresh inquests into their deaths last week.

Davis said his colleague Norman Bettison asked him to attend a "briefing" on the morning of Monday 17 April.

Opportunity

He said Bettison saw this as an "opportunity for us to get ourselves noticed" and that it would benefit them "career-wise".

Davis said Chief Superintendent Terry Wain addressed between 20 and 30 people at the meeting.

Davis told the jury, "His words were, and I can almost remember these verbatim, that, 'We are going to put the blame for this disaster where it belongs—on the drunken,



A photo shown to the inquest shows fans who have escaped onto the pitch during the Hillsborough disaster

ticketless Liverpool fans."

He said Wain also spoke about "the kind of actions that were going to support this hypothesis".

"He said, 'We're going to now go away and gather the evidence

to show this.' He began to recount a series of the kind of actions he wanted to pursue.

"I remember him specifically talking about going—I think it was to the M62 motorway—to look at

cans, beer cans, alcohol cans.

"We were going to go to licensed premises, off-licences, look at what had happened there in terms of alcohol consumption."

Davis told the inquests that he

"felt this was a very high-level briefing". He added, "It was really setting out that South Yorkshire Police were going to pursue this strategy.

"Mr Wain had been given a job to do, and he would have only been given that job by the direction of the chief constable."

Decisive

Davis said that he had thought it was "very early to have come to such a decisive, definitive conclusion".

But he said he didn't raise concerns at the time because to do so would have been "out of sync" with opinion in South Yorkshire Police.

"I probably would have had to walk and resign from the organisation," he said. "My experience of South Yorkshire Police is that people that raise issues and problems become the problem."

The inquests continue.

Chief superintendent David Duckenfield was in overall charge of policing on the day of the disaster.

He began giving evidence as Socialist Worker went to press.

See socialistworker.co.uk for updates

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Abuse was 'living hell' but cops just ignored victims

The right wing press say that the Oxfordshire abuse scandal is about race. But once again a report has slammed authorities' attitudes, writes **Sadie Robinson**

CHILD ABUSE continued for years in Oxfordshire because of institutional failings in the police and other authorities, according to a new report.

The Serious Case Review was commissioned following the 2012 arrests of over 20 men suspected of abusing girls in the county.

It noted similar failures to protect children elsewhere and concluded, "For all this to be the result of inept, uncaring and weak staff, and leaders who need to go, seems highly improbable."

The report detailed horrific abuse suffered by six girls in Oxfordshire.

Victims were raped and abused with knives, meat cleavers and baseball bats. They were beaten and burned. One said the situation was a "living hell".

Seven men were convicted in 2013 of charges including rape, conspiracy to rape, and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

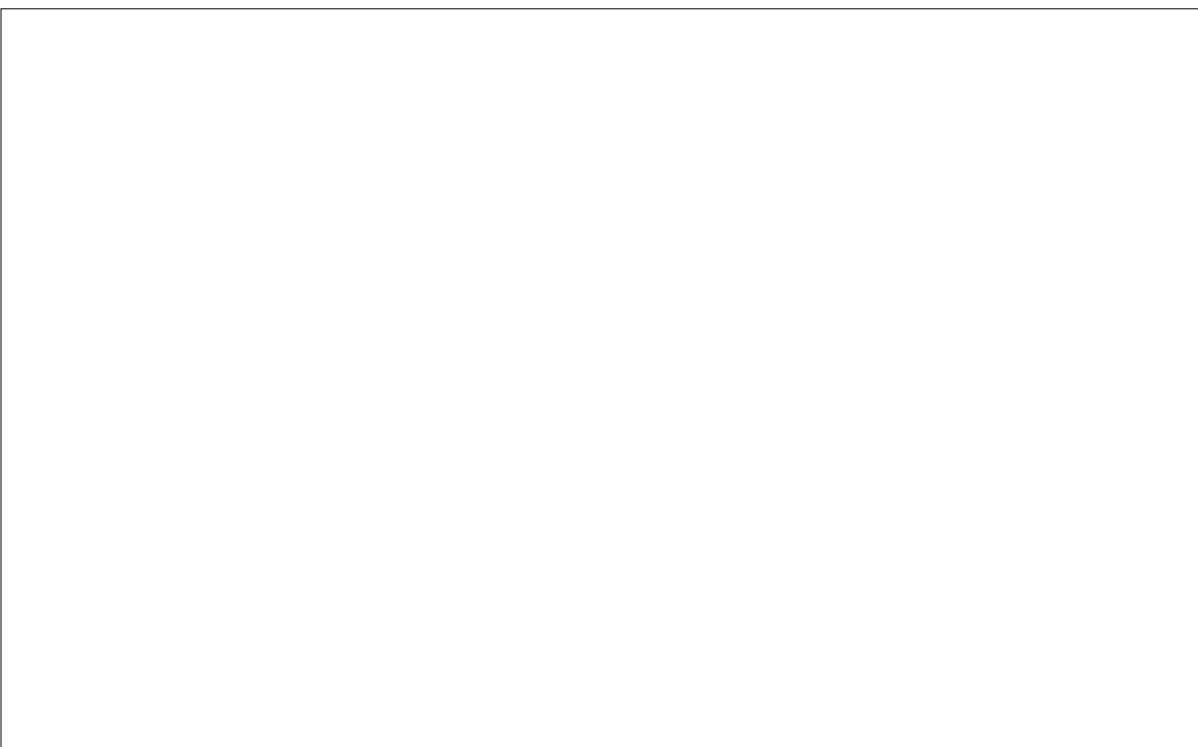
Yet the authorities saw victims as "very difficult girls making bad choices. They received much less sympathy as a result."

One entry in the Missing Persons database describes a victim as "prostituting herself". Another "deliberately puts herself at risk".

A Criminal Investigation Department sergeant said a 14 year old appeared 18 or 19 and "initiated sexual intercourse" with adult men. Other victims' accounts were "disbelieved or thought to be exaggerated".

Police failed to pursue cases citing lack of evidence or victims' refusal to cooperate. But when victims did come forward, police took no action.

One victim said, "I turned up at the police station at 2/3am, blood all



BACK STORY

Seven men were convicted in 2013 of abusing girls in Oxfordshire between May 2004 and June 2012

● The victims were between 12 and 16 years old

● The Serious Case Review estimated 370 girls may have suffered sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire over the last 15 years

● Thames Valley Police received around 1,600 allegations of abuse last year—90 percent in families

THE REPORT looks into cases of child abuse in Oxford

over me, soaked through my trousers to the crotch. They dismissed it as me being naughty, a nuisance."

The report found, "Victims made allegations or were found in dire straits after abuse yet 'nothing happened'."

One child was taken to hospital with injuries after being abused.

Police made "no inquiries" as to what had happened. The child was admitted to Accident and Emergency two weeks later complaining of assault. In 2006 the missing persons

coordinator wrote to a number of senior police officers about two girls who were frequently "Mispers", or missing persons. She said it seemed that finding them was seen as "not worth the effort".

She added that children's home staff had given "plenty of information as to the vulnerability of these girls."

"I don't know what more can be done to ensure that these vulnerable Mispers are treated as a priority enquiry until one of them is found dead."

Race was not the issue

FIVE OF the seven men convicted in 2013 were of Pakistani heritage.

The Daily Mail newspaper claimed this "discouraged police from acting".

Yet the report said, "No evidence has been seen of any agency not acting when they should have done because of racial sensitivities."

It added that "there was no evidence that the ethnic origin of the perpetrators played a part in the delayed identification" of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

The report looked at several reviews from

various authorities. It said their "frankness" suggested that, had authorities been concerned about appearing racist, "it would have been uncovered and reported".

And abuse wasn't limited to gangs of men targeting victims on the streets.

Child social care services had information suggesting that three of the six victims had experienced sexual abuse in their family of origin.

Most had experienced domestic violence at home or in their birth families. Two had been removed from their homes for their own protection before suffering CSE.



Cop on the beat

Lack of resources for cases

THE REPORT highlighted the lack of resources available to help children suffering abuse.

"There were recurrent financial challenges," it said.

In 2006, while the abuse was taking place, Oxfordshire spent very little on Children's Social Care (CSC).

"It was the 132nd lowest of 150 authorities nationally and the number of social workers was the tenth lowest in the country," the report added.

Sometimes victims were placed out of the county to try and protect them.

Yet asking for such a placement "was seen as an unacceptable

demand on budgets".

One CSC report said "very vulnerable girls were left in unacceptable family situations for too long" partly because of "attempts to manage the pressure on budgets".

Police described many situations where a Missing Persons report "was seen as a process, not a need to investigate".

The report added, "Resources would have been overwhelmed by actively investigating every episode."

It said child protection was seen as a priority but wasn't "always in formal priorities set by the government".

Report: abuse was 'organised'

THE REPORT was commissioned by Maggie Blyth (above). It said there was a "commercial aspect" to the abuse.

Victims were "hired out for up to hundreds of pounds, and trafficked and sold for sex".

It said that some girls were also made to deal drugs. Police said the abuse was "organised".

Failure links to Cameron

COUNCILLOR Louise Chapman (above) was responsible for child protection between 2005 and 2012.

She represents Witney West in David Cameron's constituency in Oxfordshire.

Her father, Barry Norton, has led Cameron's campaign team in three general elections since 2000.

Many crimes not recorded

THE REPORT found "confusion related to a national culture where children are sexualised at an ever younger age".

As a result some crimes were not recorded as such. Police admit that "many more" should have been.

IN BRIEF

Day of action for Fast Food Rights

ACTIVISTS FROM the Fast Food Rights campaign met in London on Wednesday of last week to plan a national day of action on Wednesday 15 April.

The campaign, led by the food workers' BFAWU union, is fighting for a £10 an hour minimum wage.

The day of action is set to coincide with a huge strike by fast food workers in the US.

●Glasgow Fast Food Rights public meeting—Saturday 14 March, 2pm, Unison office, 84 Bell Street, Glasgow G1 1LQ

Cardiff march takes on 40 Days for Life

AROUND 40 people marched through driving rain in Cardiff, South Wales, on an International Women's Day protest against anti-abortion group 40 Days for Life.

Local Abortion Rights activists called the march.

They've been protesting against the 40 Days for Life bigots, who've been picketing the Bpas sexual health clinic on St Mary's street.

Abortion Rights plans further action against 40 Days for Life.

TUC remembers Claudia Jones

CLAUDIA JONES, who founded the Notting Hill Carnival, was celebrated at the TUC on Friday of last week to mark International Women's Day.

Historians Mary Davis and Marika Sherwood talked of her life. Broadcaster and musician Alex Pascall reminisced about knowing her until her death in 1964.

It is also 100 years since the radical black journalist's birth in Trinidad.

ITV workers could ballot over pay

WORKERS AT ITV are edging closer to a strike ballot over pay.

Members of the NUJ, Bectu and Unite unions overwhelmingly voted to reject a below-inflation pay increase of 2 percent earlier this year.

Bosses are refusing to budge. But ITV's profits rose to £712 million in 2014.

Bectu said it would serve formal notice of a strike ballot "within days".

Globe workers want a better pay deal

TOUR GUIDES and exhibition workers at the Globe Theatre in London could be set to ballot for a strike over pay.

Globe bosses have offered a pay deal of £11.72 per hour. But this is out of line with pay rates for similar venues in London.

Members of the Bectu union met on Friday of last week to discuss next steps in the campaign for higher pay.

EDUCATION



STRIKERS AND supporters at Cannon Street station

PICTURE: SHEILA AMROUCHE

'We are going to win our academies battle'

by SHEILA AMROUCHE

THERE WERE big picket lines at four schools in Lewisham, south east London, on Thursday of last week. Strikers from the NUT, NASUWT and GMB unions were supported by parents, students and other trade unionists.

The strike, at Prendergast Hilly Fields, Prendergast Ladywell, Prendergast Vale and Sedgehill, was over threats to convert the schools to academies.

GMB member Vivienne told Socialist Worker, "We believe in being part of the family of local authority schools, not in privatisation. We don't need an academy."

NUT member Hannah added, "We need to stop the academy. Today's show of strength shows we can win."

Jason, a parent, said he was "disgusted and appalled" by governors' drive to turn the schools into academies.

"I fully support the workers' strikes," he said.

Students refused to cross picket lines, and made banners and placards against academy schools.

Phil Rowan visited pickets to show support. "Hilly Fields students told me that during the last strike they watched from their classroom window," he said.

"Their English teacher crossed the picket line.

"When class started she told

the students to get their books out. They stood up and walked out—refusing to be taught by what they called a scab."

A group of 60 students, teachers, staff and parents protested at the Leathersellers' Company, which owns the schools, in the City of London after the picket lines. Students then led off a march to St Paul's cathedral for a rally.

Student Sasha said, "We've done sit-ins, blocked the corridors and refused to work for 20 minutes several times. It's our education, our future, our fight. We're going to win."

●Send messages of support to gmb.lewisham@tiscali.co.uk, NUT@lewisham.gov.uk and Kathy.duggan@exec.nasuwt.org.uk

ADULT EDUCATION

Stop cuts to 'second chance' education

MORE THAN 11,000 people have signed a petition against adult education funding cuts.

Non-apprenticeship learning could be cut by 24 percent in 2015-16.

Jenny Sutton, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate for Tottenham in the general election, is a lecturer at Conel college in north London. She told Socialist Worker, "Further education gave me a second chance at education.

"I was a typesetter before I went to evening classes and trained to be a teacher. I



Daniel and Kieran

had two pre-school children and couldn't have done it if it hadn't been fully funded. We need education and jobs—and an MP who will fight for that."

UCU general secretary Sally Hunt told Socialist

Worker that the cuts risk "stripping away the springboard which many thousands of people use to get back into learning".

Kieran and Daniel are carpentry students at Conel college. Kieran told Socialist Worker, "Without the chance of further education, I don't know what I'd be doing now."

Daniel added, "I live on Broadwater Farm where lots of young people are unemployed. I'd be looking for work in Sainsburys if it wasn't for further education."

●Sign the petition at ucu.org.uk/feffunding

BARNESLEY COLLEGE

WORKERS AT Barnsley College are preparing for a four-day strike to defend jobs and conditions.

The UCU union members are fighting a restructure that would downgrade jobs and pay for some workers.

Workers held a successful and well supported three-day strike against the

attack earlier this year.

They are set to walk out from Monday of next week—which will be a national day of solidarity with the strikers.

●Send messages of support to lee.short1975@gmail.com and donations to Barnsley College UCU c/o 43 Granville St, Barnsley S75 2TQ

SALFORD UNIVERSITY

UCU UNION members at the University of Salford are balloting for strikes to defend two workers.

Bosses have sacked two union members who opposed a planned restructure at the university. They have refused the two the chance to appeal.

The ballot ends on Friday 27 March.

REFUSE WORKERS

Barking strike on the cards

by SUSANA ITOUAZIZ

REFUSE WORKERS in the GMB union at Barking and Dagenham council could strike if the council refuses to reverse cuts.

Some 90 percent voted in favour of taking industrial action in a ballot.

The council announced cuts last November. They included downgrading frontline workers and cutting refuse workers' "pre-start".

Pre-start is a safety check carried out on a refuse vehicle before it leaves the yard. It takes 30 minutes for the check to be carried out to a satisfactory level. It counts for £2,000 of refuse workers'

wages per year.

The council wants to cut pre-start to 15 minutes and slash workers' wages by £1,000 a year. The GMB has refused to agree to this as it disregards the safety of workers and residents.

The strike is part of a wider movement against cuts in the borough.

Campaigners plan a candlelit vigil on Thursday of next week as part of the Campaign to Save Our Civic Centre. It assembles at 6.30pm at the Civic Centre in Dagenham.

●Send messages of support to Barking and Dagenham Trades Union Council at s.aitouaziz@hotmail.co.uk

CONSTRUCTION

New call for Crossrail action

by ALAN KENNY

AROUND 80 people attended the national construction rank and file meeting in Glasgow last Saturday.

Much discussion was given over to the situation on London's Crossrail project.

Two Unite members have been sacked recently on different Crossrail sites after raising health and safety concerns.

And last week the verdict was out in the inquest into Rene Tkacik's death. Rene, a 44 year old Slovakian man, was killed by a ton of falling wet concrete in March last year on the Fisher Street site.

A whistleblower's evidence, which reported among other things incidents of falling wet concrete, was

deemed inadmissible.

The verdict was accidental death but an accompanying narrative verdict raised more questions than it answered.

In particular it mentioned the lack of a safety exclusion zone. It was reported that one worker was taken to hospital in a van instead of an ambulance after an accident so a formal report wouldn't be logged.

The meeting voted unanimously for a campaign of protests which will begin this week.

■Blacklisted worker Dave Smith is set to launch his new book Blacklisted—the secret war between big business and union activists on Thursday of this week in the Houses of Parliament, Committee room 15 from 6pm.

OBITUARY

Marie McGorrigan 1947-2015

COMRADES WERE saddened to learn of the recent death of Marie McGorrigan.

Marie was a passionate socialist who had been active in the Ulverston, Barrow and South Cumbria area in particular for many years.

She had been active in many campaigns including Medical Aid For Vietnam, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and anti-nuclear campaigns.

In 1997 Marie joined the Socialist Workers Party.

She campaigned against the bombing of the Balkans in 1999 and continued to be very active in the Stop the War movement against war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

She was highly involved with anti-fascist campaigns, first with the Anti Nazi League and then with Unite Against Fascism. These helped stamp out, at an early



Marie McGorrigan

stage, the attempted rise of the Nazi British National Party in Barrow-in-Furness.

She dearly loved music including Chumbawamba, Rory MacLeod and many others.

Marie strove to live her life by the values of a future socialist society—exuding warmth, generosity and compassion towards others.

She will be greatly missed, and our thoughts are with Lesley, Susan and all her family and friends. Paul Jenkins

PRIVATISATION

National gallery set for more walkouts

by ANNETTE MACKIN

WORKERS AT the National Gallery in London have voted to escalate their action in opposition to bosses' privatisation plans with a further seven days of strikes.

They are set to walk out for two days from Saturday of this week followed by a five-day strike from 24 March, with pickets from 9am-11am.

Workers are angry at plans to privatise 400 out of 600 jobs. The gallery doesn't even pay its staff the London Living Wage.

Action

The walkouts would be the third round of action workers have taken this year against the proposals. They completed two five-day walkouts, one in January and another in February.

On the eve of January's walkout, bosses suspended PCS union rep Candy Udwin for allegedly disclosing a confidential figure about the cost of outsourcing to the union.

But their attempt to undermine the strikes has failed as Candy has joined workers on the picket lines.

Workers say solidarity is crucial as they step up their fight. Bosses have rejected alternative proposals put by



GALLERY STAFF on strike last month

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

HOW TO SHOW SOLIDARITY

- **Invite speakers** from the dispute into your union branch or campaign meeting noprivatisationatNG@gmail.com
- **Donate to the strike fund:** Sort code 086001, Account no. 20169002, or cheques to Culture Sector Hardship Fund, c/o PCS North West Region, Jack Jones House, 1 Islington, Liverpool L3 8EG
- Get MPs to back **Early Day Motion** 300 bit.ly/1Jn6AtA
- Sign and share the **petition** and **statement** bit.ly/1kELiGx
- Download **#ReinstateCandy** poster bit.ly/reinstatecandy
- See [nonationalgalleryprivatisation](http://nonationalgalleryprivatisation.com) on Facebook

TRANSPORT

Union urges 17,000 staff at Network Rail to reject deal

THE RMT union is encouraging some 17,000 workers to reject a final pay offer from Network Rail bosses.

Members in operations, maintenance, customer services and associated grades were balloted from Monday of this week.

The four-year deal means a pay cut this year from the zero percent offer, with an RPI rate of inflation for each of the next three years. There is also no commitment against compulsory redundancies past the end of 2015.

Subsidised travel for employees being offered is "nothing more than a card that can be purchased by any member of the travelling public" says the union.

The ballot closes on 24 March.

■ **PAY TALKS** on London Underground (LU) have reached a critical point according to workers' RMT union. Bosses are offering a real terms pay cut alongside a "pitiful" lump sum payment for night working which the RMT says it "has rejected as wholly unacceptable and an insult to members".

RMT activists are set to meet on Monday of next week "to discuss the possibility of further industrial action on LU in relation to defending jobs, services and conditions".

■ **TUBE DRIVERS** struck in defence of a sacked colleague last week. Alex McGuigan was sacked after failing a breathalyser test but the RMT union said his diabetes resulted in a "false positive" result.

LONDON BUSES

THE UNITE union has been holding a series of meetings among London bus drivers building the campaign for sector-wide negotiations. The meetings are taking place across London.

Some 20,000 drivers walked out in a series of strikes earlier this year that brought traffic in the capital to a standstill.

They struck against unequal pay that sees drivers earn over £3 an hour difference between companies and more than 80 different pay rates.

One Unite shop steward told Socialist Worker, "We have the support so we should keep the pressure on—we should call another strike."

Meanwhile, drivers at Abellio are to be balloted for action this week in a separate dispute after bosses reneged on an agreed two-year pay deal.

HOUSING

New homes occupation

TENANTS AND supporters have occupied a newly empty house on the Sweets Way estate in Barnet, north London. Landlord Barnet Homes is evicting people to make way for redevelopment.

Developer Annington Homes wants to clear out 150 homes to replace the estate with expensive private housing.

Most residents have been evicted and stay in temporary accommodation. But Rejane Barbosa is still there.

She said, "How does Barnet Homes justify demolishing 150 family homes, while leaving the community who have been living there for more than five years with nowhere to go?"

In south London tenants on the Aylesbury estate and their supporters were set to protest on Saturday of this week against plans to knock it down.

The protest is backed by Defend Council Housing (DCH) and other campaigns. They want the Aylesbury



The Sweets Way occupation

PICTURE: BARNET HOUSING ACTION GROUP

to be renovated and kept as mostly council housing.

Eileen Short from DCH told Socialist Worker, "The squeeze on housing is getting worse and people's confidence to do something about it is going up."

"The Aylesbury is a front line because it's a big estate threatened with demolition and the loss of many homes. We need to unite and draw together all the campaigns into a movement that can put real pressure on the politicians."

● March for Aylesbury, Saturday 14 March, assemble 12 noon, Burgess Park, SE5 7QH

HEALTH ROUND-UP

■ **SOME 120 hospital porters** in Dundee began a series of pay walkouts on Friday of last week.

Workers from Ninewells Hospital and Royal Victoria Hospital walked out at 12pm halfway through their shifts for a half day stoppage.

Their Unite union said that employer NHS Tayside owes workers £6 million in historic back pay due to placing them in the wrong pay bracket.

■ **A PLANNED five-day strike** by hospital workers in Woolwich, south London, was suspended by the GMB union following a new offer from bosses at outsourcing

giant ISS.

The dispute is about weekend and unsocial hour rates, and pay parity with NHS staff.

If accepted the deal would move the lowest paid staff to the new NHS minimum rate of £7.72 per hour.

■ **SACKED TRADE** unionist and health worker Charlotte Monro's tribunal is set to end by Monday of next week.

Barts Health Trust bosses sacked Charlotte after she raised concerns about cuts at the local council's health scrutiny committee.

Her supporters are going to the tribunal to show support.

MINERS

Banners are still held high

SOME 1,000 people joined a march last Saturday in Hatfield, Doncaster, marking 30 years since the march back to work that ended the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

In Wakefield 700 people joined a With Banners Held High event. And over 60 people attended the latest screening of Still The Enemy Within in Barnsley organised by South Elmsall Labour Town Council.

This included Mark Jones, father of David Jones, the young Frickley miner killed on the picket line at Ollerton in March 1984.

Four previous Barnsley screenings have attracted nearly 600 people to them. ● 2015 David Jones Memorial Rally—Saturday 14 March, 10.30am, NUM Offices, Victoria Rd, Barnsley

FIRE AND RESCUE

Control operators escalate strikes over shift changes

EMERGENCY 999 control operators in Essex have stepped up their fight with Fire and Rescue bosses by beginning an eight-day walkout on Tuesday of this week.

Workers had planned to strike for 72 hours but escalated their action after bosses refused to budge over changes to shift patterns.

Shifts are being changed from nine hour days and 15 hour nights with rest breaks to 12 hour days and 12 hour nights.

One control worker said, "My young children are now having two late nights and one really early morning in order for me to go to work. "The cost of childcare at these times is astronomical,

let alone a worry on their education and wellbeing."

The increased workload has forced some to leave or to go part time.

The workers' FBU union has tried to negotiate with bosses—but they have not moved.

The walkout is set to be the longest by the mostly women workforce in the dispute.

FBU pickets outside the Kelvedon Park control room were in good spirits, with firefighters visiting strikers.

Workers plan to picket outside every day from 9am-4.30pm.

Steve Collins

● Rush messages of support on Twitter @EssexFBU or by email essexfbu@live.co.uk

Protesters hit out at climate chaos

Thousands marched in London to call for action on emissions last week—and many were arguing for a radical change of the system, reports Dave Sewell

MORE THAN 20,000 people marched through central London last Saturday demanding urgent action to tackle climate change.

The Time to Act demonstration was called to put climate change at the top of the agenda ahead of the general election in May and the international talks in Paris in December.

The slogans and organisations taking part were diverse.

But many of those marching were clear that stopping greenhouse emissions is possible—and it's capitalism that stands in the way.

Jordan, a student at the University of Lincoln told Socialist Worker, "The time for debate has passed—we need action."

"The government continues to pour resources into fossil fuels."

"That needs to be diverted elsewhere now."

"It comes down to inequality—those at the top won't let go of their profits, and that's why we're in this mess."

Issues

Kim Hunter and John Atkins had travelled down from York. Kim said, "We need people on the streets now because all the issues are converging."

"The US alone spends a trillion dollars a year on war—imagine what that could do for the planet."

Rod, an electrician, thought bosses and politicians who wreck the planet should face jail.

He said, "If the scientists are right that we have to keep the warming below two degrees then it's not looking good."

"This could be our last chance for change."

The protest was called by the Campaign against Climate Change (CCC) and other organisations.

Suzanne Jeffery from CCC



PART OF the Time to Act demonstration in central London

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

told Socialist Worker the turnout was "fantastic".

"It's the second time in seven months that thousands of people have taken to the streets of London against climate change," she said.

"Politicians can no longer say this is an issue people

don't care about.

"Every opinion poll shows people are worried and think something should be done."

"But thanks to the lies of the fossil fuel industry, many can't see any alternative. We have to take them on and show that there is a way out."

Jon Woods, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) parliamentary candidate for Portsmouth North, agreed.

He said, "Capitalism is incapable of saving our planet because profit always comes before people."

"The only way to prevent catastrophic climate change is for people around the world to act together."

"Protests, direct action and strikes can either force our rulers to act or help us get rid of them."

"There is a growing climate change movement and we need to keep building it."

The final rally was a sea of people outside parliament.

The biggest cheer went to Caroline Lucas MP of the Green Party.

The Greens had a huge presence on the march despite their party's conference taking place in Liverpool at the same time.

Fairer

She said, "The policies we want are the ones that will make the world a better and fairer place for everyone."

Trades Union Congress general secretary Frances O'Grady sent a message of support.

Chris Baugh from the PCS union also spoke.

He explained that the technology exists to slash emissions now and create jobs in the process, as the CCC's Million Jobs report makes clear.

There are many challenges ahead for the climate movement.

But it is bouncing back from the demoralisation that followed the disastrous United Nations climate talks in Copenhagen in 2009.

And anti-capitalist ideas are getting more and more of a hearing.

In a video message activist and author Naomi Klein told protesters, "We need an economy that is 100 percent powered by renewables."

"We need to transform not just how the power is generated, but who controls it."

"We bailed out the banks—and we've paid for it. No way are we bailing out the fossil fuel companies."

EVENT

Where next for climate movement?

A DAY of debates is set to take place in London around the ideas in activist and author Naomi Klein's influential book *This Changes Everything*.

In it she argued that climate change cannot be addressed without taking on the whole system.

The *This Changes Everything* 2015 conference will take place on 28 March in central London. Klein will be appearing via



Banner on Saturday's demo

video link.

There will be discussions around how the climate crisis is linked to war and economic meltdowns—and what is the alternative.

Speakers are set to include Green Party leader Natalie Bennett and Asad Rehman from Friends of the Earth.

There will also be representatives from Campaign Against Climate Change and Fuel Poverty Action.

This Changes Everything 2015
Sat 28 Mar, 9am-6pm
Friends Meeting House,
173-177 Euston Rd,
London NW1 2BJ
Tickets available from
thischangeeverything.co